FOREWORD

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The year 2020 will be remembered as a year of great turmoil and hardships in all spheres of business. The world was not prepared for the devastation that the Covid 19 pandemic would bring to all countries- irrespective of size, wealth, or status. The world economy has been brought to a virtual standstill and countries are all experiencing massive job losses, economic downscales, increasing numbers of job losses, massive closures of business and major supply chain disruptions.

Amid all this chaos the retail industry has been hard hit with many well known brands either disappearing or downsizing in their operations. The brick and mortar retailers worldwide have had a difficult few years and in 2020 this has escalated dramatically. Many retail chains have either closed permanently or filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. AT&T is planning on closing over 250 of its stores; Gap has placed a hold on paying its rent in the USA; GNC filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy; JC Penny plan on closing 168 stores permanently; Microsoft plans to close all 82 of their stores; Neiman Marcus has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy; and even Starbucks have announced that they will close up to 400 company operated stores.

In South Africa the same trend has emerged with Edcon filing for business rescue; Kulula airlines has filed for bankruptcy; Media 24 publications closed a number of print publications; Prada closed its only store in South Africa ; and the list goes on.

It is however not all doom and gloom and many entrepreneurs and others have looked for positives in this trying times. Companies such as Zoom, Microsoft teams and others has placed virtual meetings on the map and may have created a new way of doing business – at a lower cost! Many companies have embarked on new and better ways to deliver their products – via courier or other means; online shopping has shown tremendous growth; new businesses in the health and sanitation field has emerged; and people have learned to work effectively from home.

The stock markets have taken a beating the past months but signs are there that a recovery is imminent. Needless to say all businesses are in for a difficult year or more ahead but it is also the time to reflect on how we do things and find better ways to run your business – be it in education; retail or service there are always means to improve

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Organic food: A case of Gauteng Province in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

The thriving consumption of organic food is not only motivated by hedonic value, interpersonal influence and preference, it is also the result of the ease of access and availability of organic food in numerous food stores, which has reduced the scarcity of organic food. Factors such as hedonic value, preferences, interpersonal influence and preference allow them to continue to purchase and stock more organic products. The present study focuses on organic products as a fundamental cue likely to impact customers and consumers to continuance purchase intentions and for retailers to market and stock more organic food. Structured questionnaires were distributed to consumers in the Gauteng province only. This study used a quantitative research methodology using Smart PLS 3. This software was employed to test the relationships among the three hypotheses. The results show that there is a positive relationship between the three proposed hypotheses. Based on the findings of this research, recommendations will be made to both the companies and the customers to purchase and stock more organic products. This study is expected to have real-world and academic implications to policy makers for food production companies and retailer shops such as Woolworths, Checkers, Makro, OK and Pick n Pay. In addition, the study will provide new insights and added first-hand knowledge to the existing body of literature, which is scant in South Africa.

Keywords: Organic food, Hedonic value, Interpersonal influence, Preferences, Continuance purchasing intention

INTRODUCTION

During the last decade, environmental issues have become a concern for researchers, academicians and professionals in all industries. Food consumption is not left behind; food consumption is a main concern in the area of food production because of its effect on consumers' health, the environment, organisation and economy (Reisch, Eberle & Lorek 2013). Moreover, for Nedra, Sharma and Dakhli (2015), environment and health are the most vital motives for the purchase of organic products. This is to say that health and environmental reasons are more encouraging than any other reason and consumers will be more willing to buy organic products with a greater intensity. Consumers consumption and continuous purchasing intention are driven by different factors such as place of origin, production process, transport or delivery condition, preservatives, even the way the food is cooked and consumed (Annunziata & Vecchio 2016). Additionally, the thriving consumption of organic food is not only motivated by the abovementioned factors, it is also the result of the ease of access and availability of organic food in numerous food stores, which has reduced the scarcity of organic food shopping (Hempel & Hamm 2016). On the other hand, consumers' choices can be based on other factors such as hedonic value, their preferences and interpersonal influence. The present study focuses on organic products as a fundamental cue, likely to impact customers and consumers' purchase intentions. Thus, the present study attempts to ascertain the significant

antecedents of purchasing organic products and empirically confirm the relationship between these antecedents and continuous purchasing intention. It is predictable that a better understanding of these elements would greatly help green consumers to understand and keep on purchasing these specific types of products as well as marketers to develop more suitable strategies.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

To explain the increase of green consumption occurrence, numerous viewpoints have been proposed as the antecedent variables of consumers' continuing intention to purchase green products (Loebnitz, Schuitema & Grunert 2015; Yadav & Pathak 2016; Chang & Chang 2017; Suhaily & Soelasih, 2017; Phuong & Trang 2018). Studies have empirically explored many relationships, for instance the relationship between consumer personality and green purchase intention (Lu, Chang, & Chang, 2015:205); the factors that increase consumers' purchase intentions for abnormally shaped food and organic labelling (Loebnitz et al. 2015:408) and individual differences and green consumption (Rakic & Rakic, 2015:891). Elaborating on the work of previous authors, the present study aims to investigate whether hedonic value, interpersonal influence and preference shape the influence of consumers' purchase intentions towards organic products, as well as to show the degree of the relationship between the research constructs. However, Yadav and Pathak (2016) state that the consumption of organic products is objectively a new concept in developing regions of the world such as America and Europe in contrast to their developed counterparts, so it would be interesting to study the various aspects of organic products purchase intentions in a country like South Africa. In the drive towards more globally friendly lifestyles and green consumption, this study makes a distinct contribution by elucidating how hedonic value, interpersonal influence and preference impact consumer purchase intentions, with practical and literature implications. This study also helps to address the intrinsic global problem of food waste by identifying the factors that increase consumers' purchase intentions for organic products. Moreover, the current study contributes to an understanding of the importance of continuance purchasing intention effects and consumer's attitude to interpersonal influences on organic products consumption in a developing market such as Gauteng province in South Africa.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main research objective is to investigate the impact of hedonic value, preferences, interpersonal influence and preference on continuance to purchasing organic products. The empirical objectives are:

- To examine the relationship between hedonic value and continuance purchasing intention
- To investigate the relationship between customer preference and continuance purchasing intention
- To explore the relationship between interpersonal influence and continuance purchasing intention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The current study limits itself to understanding the relationship between hedonic value, interpersonal influence and preference towards continuance purchasing intention of organic food.

Hedonic Value

Human consumption is an ordinary task of life that can be based on characteristic emotions (Josiama & Henrya 2014); explicitly, many products have hedonically-driven consumption (Miao, Lehto & Wei 2014) and hedonic products are defined as consumer behavioural facets that provide experiential consumption, enjoyment, gratification, adventure and pleasure while shopping (Ghazali, Soon, Mutum & Nguyen 2017). Additionally, hedonic value of organic products is related to excitement, fun and entertainment behaviour (Miao et al. 2014). Briefly, it is symbolic or emotional in nature (Kazakeviciute & Banyte, 2012). That is to say that hedonic value is associated to the individual emotional and unreasonableness stage of buyers, which frequently occur throughout the course

of consumption of the organic products (Tseng & Chang 2015). During that stage, the consumers enjoying or savouring new flavours is known as hedonic consumptions (Basaran & Buyukyilmaz 2015).

Additionally, it is very important to give a look on culture through the fact that it affects purchasing decisions. In this case, Khare (2014) argued that culture cannot be ignored because it influences consumers' decision making on organic food. Due to that, a study conducted by Çabuk, Tanrikulu and Gelibolu (2014) revealed that in some culture, it is essential that, from its production to consumption, the food process is appropriate to religious norms. This is quite the case with Halal products. Another significant point to consider is religion. Through religion, consumers have experiences and the ability to develop knowledge and understanding that determine consumer attitudes, preferences and buying intentions (Font-i-Furnols & Guerrero 2014). In meanwhile, Claret, Guerrero, Ginés, Grau, Hernández, Aguirre, Peleteiro, Fernández-Pato and Rodríguez-Rodríguez (2014) mention that religion is about the characteristics of a certain product and the way it is made, handled or distributed can influence consumer view.

Interpersonal Influence

Interpersonal influence mainly involves the impact of acting to persuade, assure or encourage others for the objective of having a precise result towards ecologically products (Cheah & Phau 2011). According to Lee (2015), through interpersonal influence, family and friends have the ability to influence someone's behaviour and attitude toward a product. Hence, the customers create a certain satisfactory image to his family or friends by purchasing what those ones like. Interpersonal influence includes two dimensions known as normative and informative, which relate to consumer behaviour (Sadachar, Khare & Manchiraju 2015). Kim, Lee and Hur (2013) distinguish between these two dimensions by saying that normative interpersonal influences are referred to as the view of others' behaviour (the norms of is) and are built on observations of how people act in a specified condition; while information interpersonal influence is the perceived support of a certain behaviour (the norms of ought) and help an individual determine what is accepted or rejected by a certain culture. In other words, normative has to do with how an individual would like to see others behave and informational deals with accepting information from others as proof of reality. This means that interpersonal influence plays a crucial role in the customers and consumers' decision making when it comes to the consumption of organic products.

Preference

In the view of Nagy-Pércsi and Fogarassy (2019:3), for organic consumers, health motivations are an imperative element in their purchasing decisions. For Massey, O'Cass and Otahal (2018), consumers prefer organic products, mostly because they have self-assurance in the safety and quality of the products. In the view of Mascarello, Pinto, Parise, Crovato and Ravarotto (2015:176), some of the factors that allow consumers to assess organic food are the technique of production, the brand, the taste, the freshness and the value of the product. The price that the consumers are able to spend on organic food depends on how consumers assess their preference (Ceschi, Canavari & Castellini 2018). Country of origin has a significant impact on consumers or customers' preferences of organic products (Xie, Gao, Swisher, & Zhao 2016:183). That is to say consumers value a lot the destination or region where organic products are coming from than international organic products (Annunziata & Vecchio 2016). Other factor that determines the preference of organic products is known as knowledge. In fact, in the words of Basha, Mason, Shamsudin, Hussain, Salem and Ali (2015:19) based on the information that consumers receive on organic products, such as their benefits on the environment and on people's health, knowledge is precise information that consumers prefer and make purchasing decision.

Continuance Purchasing Intention

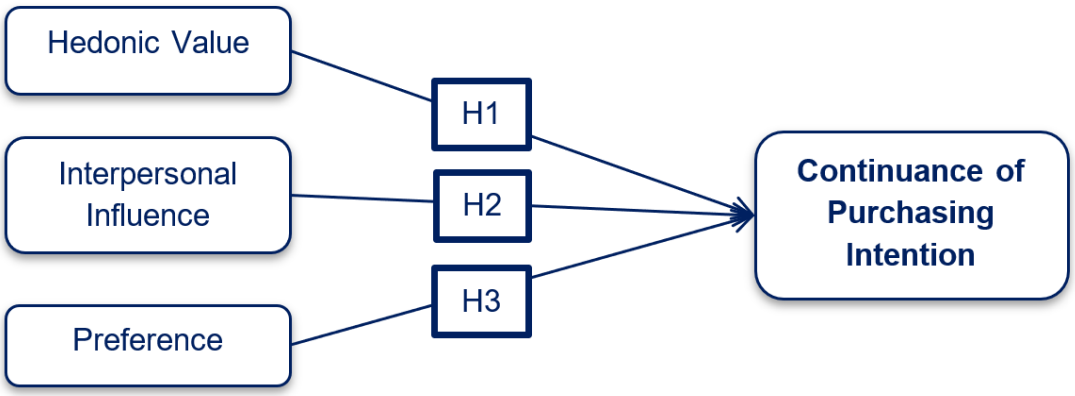
According to Ibzan, Balarabe and Jakada (2016:97), continuous purchase is referred as a real and actual action of customer to buy or use the product again; customers buy similar products recurrently from similar or different retailers. The repeating buying process depends on the intention that the consumers have to consume the same

product again. In the opinion of Nedra et al. (2015:74), intention is the direct precursor of purchasing behaviour because it determines the attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control of consumers to purchase a product or not. Moreover, Mirabi, Akbariyeh and Tahmasebifard (2015) state that purchasing intention is associated with the conduct, opinion and attitude of the customers; purchase intention is the essential point for customers and consumers to admit and value the precise product, such as organic products. Purchase intention is an effective element for customers to keep on buying. Continuance purchasing intention depends on the satisfaction that the consumers get while consuming or using the products (He, Kim & Gong 2017). It is suggested that there are several contributing factors in the development of consumer's intention to use the product continuously and it shows the importance of satisfaction in product use leading to repurchasing the same products.

CONCEPTUALISED FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES FORMULATION

From the developed literature review, the following conceptual model (Figure 1) was drawn. This conceptual framework shows the link between hedonic value, interpersonal influence, preference and continuance intention of organic products. The links between the three predictors (hedonic value, interpersonal influence, preference) and one outcome (continuance purchasing intention) represent the three hypotheses.

FIGURE 1:
CONCEPTUALISED FRAMEWORK



Based on the conceptualised framework above, the following three hypotheses were developed:

H_1: Hedonic value exerts a positive influence on continuance purchasing intention.

H_2: Interpersonal value exerts a positive influence on continuance purchasing intention.

H_3: Preference exerts a positive influence on continuance purchasing intention.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the current study, a non-probability sampling method was applied to target 350 respondents located in the Gauteng province to fill in a questionnaire on organic products. The target population are users of organic products. In order to do that, a survey measurement instrument was designed using previous studies and the relevant literatures to measure hedonic value, interpersonal influence, preference and continuance intention to purchase organic products. A multiple-item, five-point Likert-type scale ranging from one 'strongly disagree' to five 'strongly agree' was applied to all constructs. In order to do that, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) format and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) were used.

Measurement Instruments

Hedonic value items and preference items were adapted from Jeffrey and Eunju (2006). Interpersonal influence and continuance purchasing intention questionnaires were adapted from Meng-Hsiang, Chia-Hui, Chao-Min and Chun-Ming (2006:897). At first a pilot study was done to test the validity and reliability of the constructs. A five-point Likert-type scale was used to measure the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments that were anchored by one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) in order to express the degree of disagreement and agreement.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

TABLE 1
MEASUREMENT ACCURACY ASSESSMENT AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Descriptive statistics*		Cronbach's test				
Research constructs	**Mean**	**SD**	**Item-total**	**α Value**	**C.R.**	**AVE**	**Item loadings**
Hedonic value (HV)							
HV 1	3.35	1.405	0.500	0.712	0.712	0.666	0.553
HV 2			0.531				0.595
HV 3			0.899				0.916
Interpersonal influence (IN)							
IN 1	2.79	2.556	0.604	0.765	0.765	0.614	0.753
IN 3			0.698				0.847
Preference (PR)							
PR 1	1.22	3.280	0.500	0.819	0.819	0.705	0.456
PR 2			0.869				0.918
PR 3			0.881				0.930
Continuance intention (CI)							
CI 1	1.45	3.000	0.784	0.713	0.713	0.656	0.882
CI 2			0.755				0.849
CI 3			0.790				0.894
CI 4			0.781				0.822

HV=Hedonic value; IN= Interpersonal influence; PR=Preference; CI= Continuance intention

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was calculated to estimate the internal consistency of all elements and the coefficient for all the constructs was above 0.712, which is above the required threshold of 0.6 (Chiciudean, Harun, Ilea, Chiciudean, Arion, Ilies & Muresan 2019). The composite reliability greater than 0.712 of the constructs was above the recommended 0.7, with an average variance extracted (AVE) value of 0.666, which is higher than 0.5 (Persaud & Schillo 2017).

The Cronbach's alpha as well as composite reliability (α= 0.713; 0.713) of the construct named continuance purchasing intention is above 0.70 (Shuttleworth 2015); as a result, it can be stated that the internal validity of all items assessing this construct are reliable and acceptable. The AVE is 0.656 for that same construct, which is above 0.5 (Persaud & Schillo 2017); this is acceptable. The item-to-total correlation between the items and the construct is great because the values vary from 0.822 to 0.894 and they are above 0.5, which is the standard required by Laerd Statistics (2013); this shows a strong correlation between items.

Convergent validity was measured by assessing single item loadings for each variable. The results of the convergent validity are shown in Table 1. As observed, the measurement items evaluating each construct are well above the suggested value of 0.5 (Alamsyah & Angliawati 2015:32) with construct HV having loadings ranging from 0.553 to 0.916; IN 0.456 to 0.847; PR 0.500 to 0.930 and CI ranged 0.822 to 0.894. The IN 2 item was deleted

because it was 0.333, which is less than the recommended threshold of 0.5. Therefore, it could be concluded that all the items in this study meet the required threshold of 0.5, which indicates that the instruments are acceptable and valid and converging well on the respective constructs they are supposed to measure.

A correlation figure between constructs of less than 0.60 is endorsed in the empirical literature to confirm the existence of discriminant validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). As can be observed from Table 2, all the correlations were below the acceptable level of 0.60. Drawing from tables 2 and 3, the results further confirm the existence of discriminant validity.

HYPOTHESES TESTING RESULTS

TABLE 2
INTER-CONSTRUCT CORRELATION MATRIX

Variables	Hedonic value (HV)	Interpersonal influence (IN)	Preference (PR)	Continuance intention (CI)
Hedonic value (HV)	0.455			
Interpersonal influence (IN)	0.513	0.479		
Preference (PR)	0.399	0.405	0.381	
Continuance intention **(CI)**	0.417	0.309	0.466	0.462

This section discusses the three hypotheses by addressing their validity or acceptance by applying structural equation modelling. The study has shown that hedonic value, interpersonal influence and preference have a strong and positive relationship on continuance purchasing intention regarding organic products. The results are indicated in Table 3 and Figure 2.

The results indicate that HV is significantly related to CI (β = 0.028) supporting H1 and the significance path coefficient from IN to CI (β = 0.128) supports H2. Moreover, the significance and acceptance of the coefficient of PR to CI (β = 0.814) supports H3. All the results illustrated in Table 3 and Figure 2 show that HV, IN and PR are all positively associated with continuance intention (CI), from H_1 to H3. Moreover, through these results it can be concluded that there are strong and significant relationships between the research constructs. Based on that, all of the three hypotheses proposed in this study were supported and accepted.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The purpose of this paper was to identify and assess the factors that influence consumer purchase continuous intentions of organic products in the Gauteng province. The findings of this study show that the majority of the consumers in province have a high opinion of organic product and they love the organic products (Mosunmola, Adegbuyi, Kehinde, Agboola & Olokundun 2019:2). However, factors known as hedonic value, interpersonal influence and preferences need to be taken into consideration while buying organic products because they influence the continuation of buying organic products. A study done by Mosunmola et al. (2019:4) suggests that the hedonic value of organic products reflects the value of potential entertainment and enjoyment of playfulness derived from the experience of continuous purchasing intention as supported by the hypothesis H_1 . This study shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between hedonic value and continuance purchasing intention.

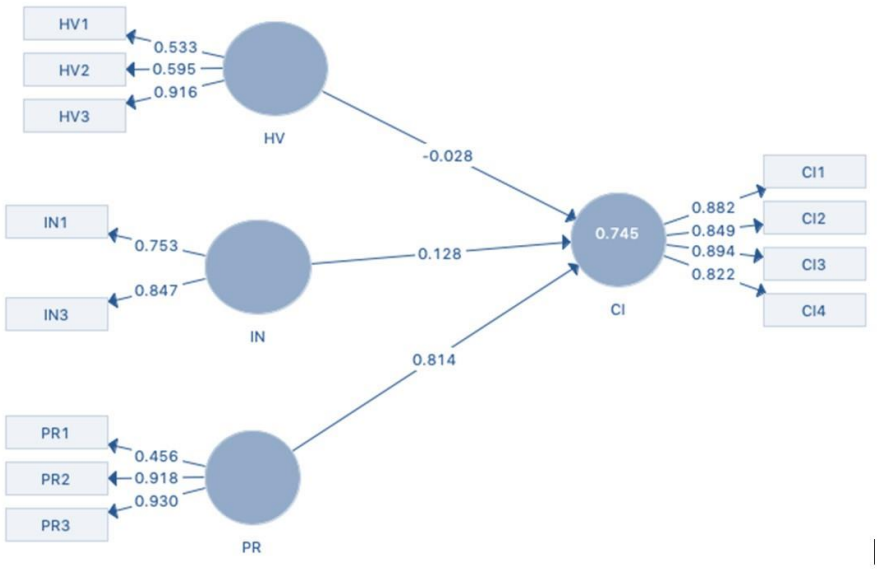
H_2, the higher the interpersonal influence and the higher the continuance purchasing intention. The study of Sadasivan, Rajakumar and Rajinikanth (2011:257) revealed that buyers exhibited a great joy and pleasure during the purchasing process, which shows a great importance of hedonic value; the result of this study work in pair with that

TABLE 3
RESULTS OF STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL ANALYSIS

Path	Hypothesis	Path coefficients (β)	T- Statistics	Decision on hypotheses
Hedonic value (HV) → Continuance Intention (CI)	H1	0.028[a]	2.005	Accept/ Significant
Interpersonal influence (IN) → Continuance intention (CI)	H2	0.128[a]	2.379	Accept/ Significant
Preference (PR)→ Continuance intention (CI)	H3	0.814[a]	6.913	Accept/ Significant

[a]Significance Level p<.10; [b]Significance Level p<.05; [c]Significance Level p<.01.

FIGURE 2:
SMART PLS FIGURE



assessment; because the current study provided substantial results. Consumers purchase intention is affected or can change under the influence of internal element such as preference, or emotions or external motivations for instance the opinions of others during the buying process (Mirabi et al. 2015:268).

H_3, on another note shows a positive and strong relationship between preference and continuance purchasing intention. Younus, Rasheed and Zia (2015:9) state in their study that purchasing intention is the preference of customers to buy the product again. In other words, preference is an aspect of continuous buying or it is associated with the repurchasing process. Interpersonal influence reflects the fact that the consumers or customers are influenced by the opinions of others to make a purchasing decision (Lee, Sung & Jeon 2019219:4). Interpersonal influence has been confirmed as positively influencing purchasing continuous intentions for organic products, which confirms hypothesis H_2.

Therefore, retailing companies and marketers should spend a lot of time doing promotions and advertisements on organic food such that companies like OK, Shoprite, Checkers and other retaikers can focus more on stocking organic food since it has been proven beyond reasonable doubt that its healthy.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This study was done in the Gauteng province of South Africa so other studies could attempt to replicate the study in other provinces for comparison reasons. Also, the study employed the quantitative approach; future studies might focus on qualitative or mixed method approaches to get deeper and more meaningful results. On top of that, other variables might be looked into that can lead to continuance purchasing intention like brand love, brand royalty, price and quality of the products.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study contributed to existing work by providing new insights into purchase continuous intention in the domain of organic products. Consumers or customers keep on purchasing the same products because of their preference, hedonic value as well as the exterior opinion of others on their purchasing decisions. By focusing on these concepts, retailers will be certain to always market their organic food and have the same consumers and customers; thereby, boosting and increasing their profits. This means that repeating purchasing action leads to long-term profit because it is easier to preserve old customers than to attract new ones (Masiero, Pan & Heo 2016:19). Companies, retailers and service providers must identify elements that impact on consumers and customers to rebuy continuously. Focusing on hedonic value, interpersonal and preference factors act as important factors to help companies to market their products well and attracting more customers.

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Taxonomy of digital signage message execution and media placement considerations

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ABSTRACT

Digital signage is a commercial promising field in marketing. Yet, it is a little researched topic, with an incomplete understanding of the factors to consider when planning digital signage message executions or media placements. There is no systematic, cohesive foundation to describe and study the features of this promising contemporary digital platform. This paper addresses an academic-practitioner divide by developing an orderly categorisation of digital signage message execution and media placement considerations and research. It offers a well-ordered conceptualisation of digital signage types and guidelines for selecting content types, formats, display quality and technical interactive designs. The resulting taxonomy is of relevance to retailers and marketers aiming to optimise utilitarian or hedonic value. Some guidance for prospect research is provided, particularly assessing the varies opportunities offered by different digital signage content types; designing experiments compare the effectiveness of digital display quality, sizes, placement and designs at different locations. The possible obstacles of interactive digital signage also deserve future research.

Keywords: out-of-home advertising media, media planning, way-finder technologies, digital marketing, advertising, communication

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary out-of-home (OOH) advertising evolved from of being predominantly static traditional advertising boards to digital signage (Roux 2018:17). Digital signage refers to electronic networked displays in public spaces used for community information, brand visibility and product offerings (Dennis, Michon, Brakus, Newman & Alamanos 2012:454). The global market for digital signage has grown remarkably and this is expected to continue (Marketwatch 2020). The global market size, valued at 7762.4 million USD in 2018, is predicted to reach 11380 million USD in 2024, growing at a compound annual growth rate of 7.9% between 2019 and 2024 (Marketwatch 2020).

African markets such as Kenya, Ghana Tanzania Nigeria are predicted to continue to grow rapidly, representing some of the most rapidly expanding digital out-of-home markets globally (PriceWaterhouseCoopers 2018:172-179). South Africa has also experienced a significant increase in the installation of digital signage across the country, as is evident by the replacement of traditional OOH signage with digital signage in various leisure and retail environments (Liebenberg 2012:243). Well-known companies, such as One Digital Media, have installed more than 7 500 digital screens in more than 1 500 stores countrywide and Primall Media has deployed 25 800 digital networks in over 24

malls and 8 500 retail outlets across the country (Liebenberg 2012:245). Various businesses in South Africa, ranging from airports, shopping malls, bars, restaurants, entertainment and healthcare providers, have also instated digital signage networks (Nelson 2016:10). Digital signage thereby contributed 30% of total OOH advertising revenue in 2018 and is predicted to represent 43% in 2022 in South Africa (PriceWaterhouseCoopers 2018:170). This evidence suggests that practitioners have begun to appreciate the advantages and benefits brought by digital signage. However, this appreciation is not yet reflected in contemporary global and South African academic literature (Roux 2018:18; Taylor 2015:170;).

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

Despite increased usage, progressive growth and revenue in digital signage; there remains a lack of appreciation for digital signage applications and opportunities in the current literature (Taylor 2015:170). Only a few international studies on digital signage have been conducted (see Table 1), most of which focus on consumers' motivation and behavioural response to digital signage content (Bae, Jun & Hough 2016:252; Burke 2009:124; Roggeveen, Nordfalt & Grewal 2016:201; Willems, Brengman & Van de Sanden 2017:38). A few others examine the role of digital signage content in contributing to retail atmospherics (Dennis, Michon, Brakus, Newman & Alamanos 2012:454; Dennis, Newman, Michon, Brakus & Wright 2016:131). Scholars in the computer science field have examined the effect of digital signage technology formats on human interactions (Bauer, Dohmen & Strauss 2011:137; Gan, Lee & Lien 2018:186; Limerick, Hayden, Beattie, Georgiou & Müller 2019:1; Ravnik & Solina 2013:1).

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF DIGITAL SIGNAGE STUDIES

	Source	Key findings	Method	Context
Digital signage content	Burke, 2009	Utilitarian content (information, seasonal offers, promotions) increase sales of hedonic food (such as snacks and alcoholic beverages).	Commercial experiments	US in Store
	Dennis et al. (2012)	Entertaining content is effective for shoppers who are retired/not employed full time. Information-based content is more suitable for high-spending and high-income shoppers	Experiment	UK in Harrods
	Dennis et al. (2014)	Hedonic content performs better at enhancing in-store experiences and subsequent attitudes towards the ad and the advertiser compared to utilitarian content	Experiment	UK in Harrods
	Lee & Cho (2017)	Informativeness, involvement, entertainment and targeting affect consumers' attention to digital signage advertising content	Survey	Korea
	Roggeveen et al. (2016)	Price outperforms non-price promotions for in-store digital signage.	Experiments switching digital on/off	Sweden
	Willems et al. (2017)	Commercial settings (e.g. as stores and self-service restaurants) would benefit from aligning the content and location of the screens	Field experiment	Belgium
Digital signage format	Bauer et al. (2011)	Contextual adoptive signage -increases attention	IT simulations	Experiment in a laboratory environment/Austria
	Gan et al. (2018)	Integration of mobile applications increases performance of digital marketing and information dissemination	IT simulations	Experiment in a laboratory environment
	Limerick et al. (2019)	Haptic feedback significantly improves usability and aesthetic appeal of digital signage. Gamification also increase engagement	IT simulations	Experiment in a laboratory environment/ Germany
	Ravnik & Solina (2013)	Attention paid to content is influence by gender and ages of viewers	Computer vision enhanced digital signage experiment and survey	Slovenia

However, studies on this novel digital platform in an emerging context are limited. Roux, Van der Waldt & Ehlers (2013:383) propose a classification framework for OOH advertising platforms in South Africa. More recently, Roux (2018:17) explored the perspectives of selected advertising practitioners on the digital signage market. However, none of these studies offered recommendations regarding the unique content and media features of digital signage for using or considering this new medium.

There is still not a complete understanding of the factors to consider when planning digital signage message executions or media placements. Designing digital signage without a proper understanding of optimal placement or uninteresting irrelevant content in a specific context will results in "display blindness", ignored by viewers (José, Otero & Cardoso 2017:1; Müller 2009:1).

The opportunities for using different content, contemporary formats, displays and interaction features are also not apparent. Practitioners might thus not be aware of the available formats and content types they can use to communicate or the technical interactive design features to consider to maximising engagement. Furthermore, there is no orderly, integrated basis to describe and research the features of this promising contemporary digital platform. This article aims to overcome these identified gaps by developing an orderly taxonomy of digital signage message execution and media placement considerations and research. Message execution involves a process of translating a brand, communicated as a value proposition or a positioning in the consumer's mind, into a message that is delivered through a certain medium (Malthouse & Calder 2010:1). The media placement is more of a tactical concern of accomplishing the required reach and frequency against the target market (Malthouse & Calder 2010:1).

The aim of this article will be achieved by addressing the following two specific secondary objectives: 1) examining the message execution factors to be considered when using digital signage; and 2) examining the media placement factors to be considered when using digital signage.

Addressing the lack of guidance on digital signage message execution and media placement considerations is valuable, since closing the academic-industry divide remains a concern. Rossiter & Percy (2013:391) raise serious concerns regarding the considerable widening of the academic-industry divide, due to scholars continued disregard of industry practices and needs. Reconnaissance of this nature is critical in light of the claimed increasing gap between the knowledge offered by scholars and that which is regarded as useful by industry (Tapp 2004:579). Scholars indubitably view the integration of theory and practice as being equally valuable and needed, believing that it is they who should be driving marketing knowledge forward. This article contributes to limited theory on digital signage as modern digital OOH media and furthers the advancement of advertising and media literature by collation digital signage message execution and media placement research. From a practical perspective, this study can guide marketers, advertisers, and brand managers regarding the key critical considerations to optimise the effectiveness of this unique digital channel. The article proceeds as follows. Digital signage message execution and media placement factors are examined and relevant studies are reviewed. Practical guidelines and suggestions for future research are also presented.

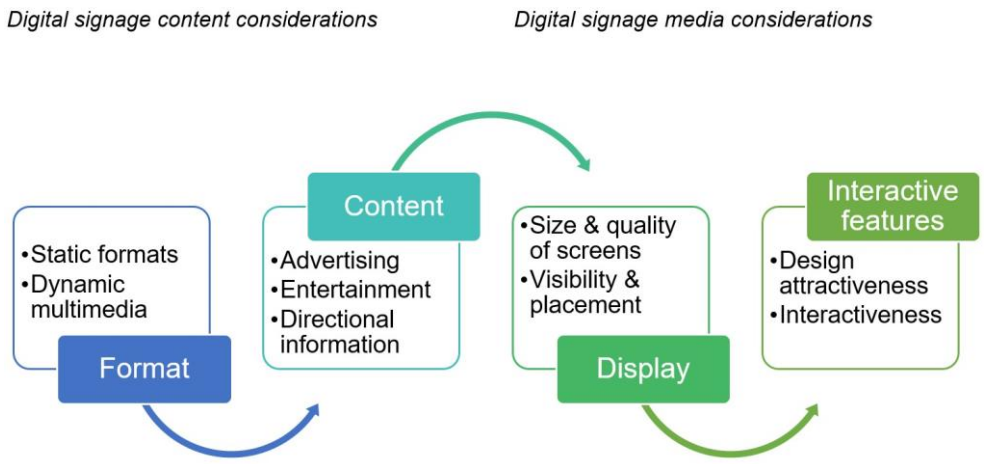
DIGITAL SIGNAGE MESSAGE EXECUTION FACTORS

Contemporary advertisers must take into consideration the effectiveness of the advertising messages delivered as well as the media where the messages are placed (Malthouse & Calder 2010:1). Both these crucial aspects should also be considered when using digital signage as medium to deliver a message and have thus been included in the taxonomy of digital signage (Figure 1).

Digital signage consists of electronic displays, a media player and mechanisms that allow the uploading and managing of content appearing on displays (Bauer, Dohmen, & Strauss 2011:137). The digital signage content refers

to the messages displayed on the screens such as advertising, information or entertainment, while the medium features include display quality and interaction with the audience when viewing the messages on the medium. In the following sections digital signage formats and content will be discussed, while integrating previous research.

FIGURE 1
CONCEPTUALISED FRAMEWORK



Digital signage formats

Static versus dynamic multimedia formats

Static advertising content displayed on digital signage does not change or incorporate any moving video or multimedia features (Bauer et al. 2011:216). This implies that no matter how much the target consumer engages with the content, it still remains static. Static content is relatively easy to control and has a low time commitment (McTigue 2013:1). This type of content is suitable for highly regulated industries where content must be carefully reviewed and approved by relevant stakeholders, such as the pharmaceutical industry. Dynamic multimedia formats, on the other hand, use video and animated messages that can be used as marketing messages for audience engagement that in turn can be converted into sales leads to follow up (Lui, Shi, Teixeira & Wedel 2018:144). Video content can be integrated as a communication strategy to produce useful, entertaining and interesting messages to target audiences (Dennis et al. 2012:213).

Research on signage formats

Several academic scholars regard the ability of digital signage to display information in the form of dynamic multimedia presentations containing audio, video and animations as one of the major benefits compared to traditional static content. Bauer et al. (2011:141) assert that contextual signage with sensors and technologies, allowing digital signs to adapt to a specific context, such as time and location, could increase audience attention. Newman, Dennis, Wright & King (2010:50) advise shopping malls to use audio, video and animation content displayed on digital screens to enhance shoppers' experiences and the atmosphere in the mall. Roggeveen et al. (2016:128) also found that dynamic content, such as video, can mentally transport shoppers to create a stronger emotional connection with the brand or product that in turn can reduce customer price sensitivity and enhance their consumption of more holistic options. These formats also seem to be effective for digital signage in higher education. Digital signage used as a campus information delivering system is more likely to be noticed if the message is incorporated with moving images, animated logos and video clips accompanied by audio and interactivity to increase the aggregation of personal attention (Nec, 2015).

Digital signage content

Newman et al. (2010:50) classify digital signage content as advertising, entertainment or directional information (see Figure 2). These major digital signage content types are reviewed in the following sections.

Advertising on digital signage

Digital signage, as one of the most economically promising fields in advertising (Bauer et al. 2011:137), offers the following unique advantages. First, advertising displayed on the digital screen can be transformed at any given time, since the content is preloaded (Ogunlade 2015:8). Advertisers can thus design customised localised content or display content obtained from a global network across locations in an environment (Bauer et al. 2011:140). This means that with just a click of a button brands can select customised local or global advertisements they wish to expose to their target audience. Secondly, the retailers inside and outside the mall can rent advertising space to display their advertisements on digital signage. This offers them opportunities to swiftly advertise their market offerings to the targeted audience (Cho, Kim, Mohammed, Adeli, Ho & Lee 2012:187). Thirdly, digital media location-based technologies and the improved implementation of technological devices (e.g. smart phones and tablets) enable consumer interaction and engagement (Roux 2018:21).

- #### Utilitarian advertising

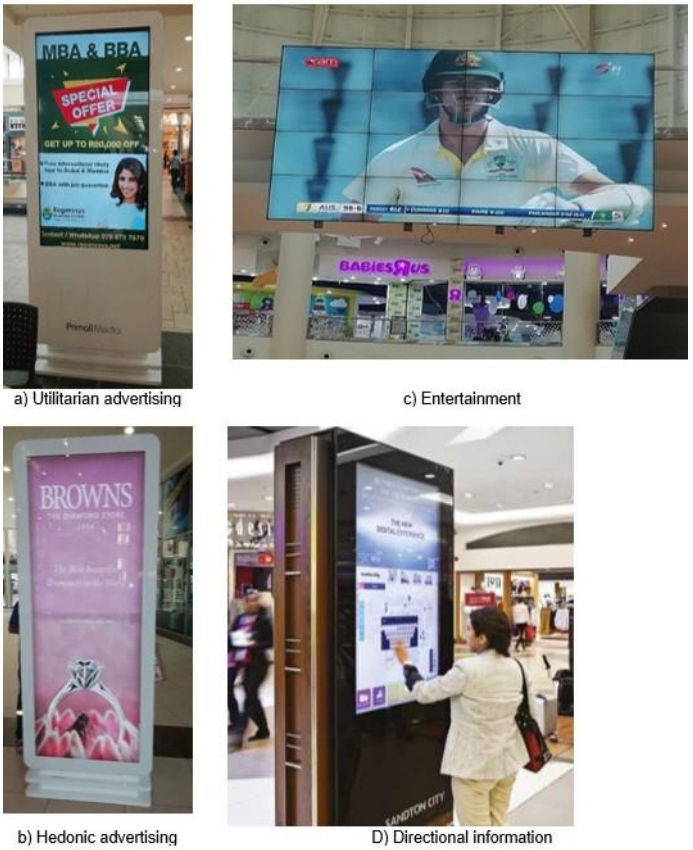
Advertising content can be classified as utilitarian (rational) or hedonic (affective). A utilitarian approach typically focuses on communicating functional product performances, factual information and cognitively oriented benefits (Holbrook & Hirschman 1982:133; Chaudhuri & Micu 2014:3). The origin of utilitarian or rational advertising approaches can be traced back to the traditional information processing model of decision making (Miller & Stafford 1999:44), suggesting that a message can change consumers' beliefs through learning (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006:467).

The utilitarian approach to advertising is typically concerned with communicating the price, features, advantages and benefits of the advertised products or services (Bradley 2018:1). A utilitarian approach to advertising, as applied by Regenesys Business School, is depicted in Figure 2a. This type of advertising relies on the persuasive power of argumentation and reasoning about brand attributes (Lee & Bob 2018:91). Such advertising messages focus on brand performance, value and the economic benefits delivered (Kotler & Armstrong 2006:468), rather than emphasising its emotional or symbolic appeal (Voss, Spangenberg & Grohmann 2003:122).

- #### Hedonic advertising

A hedonic approach to advertising execution is aimed at delivering fun, pleasure and excitement in the consumption experience and pertains to fantasy,

FIGURE 2
DIGITAL SIGNAGE CONTENT TYPES



a) Utilitarian advertising
c) Entertainment
b) Hedonic advertising
D) Directional information

Source: PriceWaterhouseCoopers (2013:234)

imagination and emotion (Holbrook & Hirschman 1982:134; Chaudhuri & Micu 2014:4). Advertising for the diamond store Browns, as seen Figure 2b, serves as example and is aimed at communicating the hedonic dimensions of the brand. This type of hedonic advertising is aimed at creating pleasurable sensations related to experiences obtained from the consumption of the promoted brand (Voss et al. 2003: 121).

Hedonic content appeals to the interest and emotions of the targeted consumers (Mano & Oliver 1993:264). Hedonic advertising aimed at influencing the emotions of consumers (Bradley 2018:2) is regarded as emotional persuasion that relies on the subconscious minds of consumers to receive, process and evaluate messages (Hafer, Mantonakis, Fitgerald & Bogaert 2016:38). When conscious thoughts or the mind is not fully aware of the information being processed and evaluated, consumers make purchasing decisions relying on emotion, instinct and feeling rather than facts (Decker 2018:11). Digital signage with hedonic content could be used to facilitate affective engagement with brands or products, thereby evoking a positive response (Dennis, Brakus & Alamanos 2013:341). When consumers are emotionally attached to brands, they tend to be more loyal and invest their money and time in the brand (Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich & Lacobucci 2010:334; Thomson, MacInnis & Park 2005:325).

- Research on utilitarian and hedonic digital signage advertising content

Only a few studies examining the effect of digital signage advertising have been published, most of these examine the effect of content viewed by shoppers while inside retail stores and only one study considered digital signage advertising effectiveness outside of stores. Dennis, Brakus, Gupta & and Alamanos (2014: 2250) compared the effect of utilitarian and hedonic advertising on consumers' processing and experiences of stimulus inside a high-end store. They found that sensory-affective content performs better at enhancing in-store experiences and subsequent attitudes towards the advertisement and the advertiser compared to utilitarian content that evoked an intellectual experience. Burke (2009:129) proves that delivering utilitarian content such as newsworthy information, seasonal offers or promotions of new items on digital signage inside stores is particularly efficient to increase sales of hedonic food (such as snacks and alcoholic beverages). This is in line with the more recent findings of Roggeveen et al. (2016:128) who established that price outperform non-price promotions in the case of in-store digital signage advertisements. Dennis et al. (2013:341) focused on digital signage placed in the public areas of malls and found that hedonic advertising content with a strong sensory component can evoke affective brand experiences, while intellectual experiences can be evoked by utilitarian content.

Entertainment

Besides conveying commercial content, digital signage can also offer a strong entertainment component (Dennis et al. 2012:454). Digital signage content could for example include games, discounts and coupons to reward shoppers for participation. These could be used to increase brand recall at point-of-purchase and ultimately increased sales (Bauer et al. 2011:140). Live sport matches can also be broadcast via digital signage and thereby influence visitors to spend more time in a specific environment (Stahlberg & Maila 2012:217). Figure 2c depicts a digital screen installed at the food court of the Pavilion Shopping Mall displaying a live cricket game between South Africa and England.

Digital signage can also be used to display other types of entertainment activities such as music concerts, movie trailers and art (Dennis et al., 2012:426). On the aesthetic side of things, there are now even attempts to deliver art to the public via digital signage. An original industry-wide initiative in both the UK and US, called Art Everywhere, utilises high resolution digital signage to display paintings by well-known artists to the broader public (Taylor, 2015).

The need and mood of the targeted market must be considered when developing digital signage content. Dennis

et al. (2012: 466) found that entertaining content is effective for shoppers who are retired or not employed full time, while information-based content is more suitable for high-spending and high-income earning shoppers in malls. Viewers are more likely to devote their attention to digital signage content that is relevant, interesting and attractive (Meziani & Hussien 2017:63).

Directional information

Digital signage is not only helpful for entertaining and commercial purposes, but can also display other types of advantageous information such as directional cues, weather reports, news and emergency broadcasts (Kelsen 2013:4). Taylor (2015), one of the leading scholars in advertising and current editor of the International Journal of Advertising, argues that digital signage can also be used to deliver public safety and emergency information to community members. Digital signage space can for example be donated in order to help recover abducted children or deliver emergency notification in the case of weather disasters and threats to personal safety.

Meziani and Hussien (2017:54) assert that scholars in the fields of interior design, architecture and space management are eager to address the problem of "being lost" in various spaces. They consequently support the examining of indoor wayfinding solutions to make it easier for visitors to successfully navigate in malls, airports, hospitals and office blocks. Way-finder technologies can furthermore be integrated into digital signage to offer self-service activities (Kelsen 2013:232). Digital signage with way-finder technology can assist shoppers with directions in the mall by allowing visitors to view directions from their current location to their desired location through interactive touch screen monitors (Lundstrom 2013:142). It can even be designed to generate a print-out or interface with a mobile device to provide directions to visitors (Dwyer 2017:34).

Digital signage with way-finder technology has been proven to enhance the attractiveness of a shopping mall by offering a sense of direction and decrease the time spent getting lost or looking for intended outlets (Bonfanti, Vigolo, Douglas & Baccarani 2017:546; Kelsen 2013:173; Meziani & Hussien 2017:55). Moreover, way-finder capabilities that enhance the shopping experience of mall visitors can ultimately lead to approach behaviour (Aradhana 2016:4; Jaffer & Timbrell 2014:211). Figure 2d shows a shopper interacting with digital signage to find directions in a super-regional mall (Sandton City) in South Africa.

Target audiences must be the focal point when developing this type of digital signage content. The directional information on digital signage must be helpful, useful and provide practical value to users. It must provide relevant and timely answers to their questions and needs in a specific environment (Dwyer 2017:34). These touch screens can also serve as suggestion boxes for expressing requests and suggestions (Dennis et al., 2012:340).

Relevance also implies a marketing orientated perspective. Shoppers can view and search catalogues with the click of a button to find their desired products or compare prices to other retailers. This automatically saves time for shoppers and simplifies their shopping search (Kalitcheva & Weitz 2006:422). This feature is particularly attractive to high-end and high-income shoppers who are usually in a hurry to complete their shopping errand (Dennis et al. 2012:454).

DIGITAL SIGNAGE MEDIA PLACEMENT FACTORS

When planning digital signage placement strategies, the actual quality of the displays and potential level of interaction with the audience must be gauged (see Figure 1). These key digital signage media placement considerations are reviewed below.

Digital signage display

Roux (2017:400) explored audience measurement practices of prominent media practitioners in the South African industry. The findings revealed that the level of media exposure is calculated by taking into account the relative size, visibility and placement of media in the different environments (Roux 2018:21). The application of these media planning factors as they pertain to digital signage is examined below.

Size and quality of the screen

The wide variety of screens types, shapes and sizes might confuse practitioners considering to use this platform, it is therefore of value to differentiate between the major types. The size and quality of the screen, as crucial dynamics of digital signage visibility, have a significant impact on the ability to obtain the desired media reach and frequency (Roux 2018:21).

The size of screens could significantly influence the response to the content displayed. Two decades ago, Reeves, Lang, Kim & Tatar (1999:32) found that larger television and movie screens led to an increase in the attention and arousal of viewers. More recently Muller, Wilmsmann, Exeler, Buzeck, Schmidt, Jay & Kruger (2009: 264) identified screen size of digital signage as one of the key features that influence the likelihood of noticing public displays. They found that people prefer to look at digital signage with large screens and interesting relevant content.

The quality of digital signage is improving continuously due to the rapid development of high definition screens such as liquid crystal displays (LCDs), light-emitting diodes (LEDs) and organic light-emitting diodes (OLEDs) (Karzazi 2014:2). LCD digital signage tends to be less expensive, wider in depth and lighter in weight than LED digital signage, but LED digital signage offer a sharper, clearer image as well as brighter colours and better contrast over LCDs (Nauticomp 2017). Shopping malls often install LED screens that provide better performance and economy compared to LCDs (Nelson 2016). The most commonly used indoor mediums include way-finders or digital kiosks with touch screens, electronic billboards with LCDs and LEDs ventilation displays (Lane, King & Reichert 2011:378). OLED technology has also gained momentum in the digital signage installed in shopping malls. OLEDs are brighter, more flexible, ultra-thin, highly energy efficient displays that offer slightly more than ordinary LED display (Chen, Lee, Lin, Chen & Wu 2018:176). The difference between LEDs and OLEDs is that OLEDs are manufactured with organic semiconductor material that allows prestige screen image and high quality (Karzazi, 2014:3).

Relative visibility and placement in the environment

Since shoppers are often bombarded with competing marketing stimuli, which can make it difficult to deliver messages effectively (Schaeffler 2012:73), digital signage must therefore be positioned to stand out relative to the environment and break through potential visual clutter (Kelsen 2013:15). Placing digital signage to be visible and impactful at a specific location significantly improves its effectiveness. The physical placement of digital signage should be scrutinised, because if the location is not right the effect will be lost (Risevision 2016).

The ideal place to install digital signage in shopping malls is where there is heavy traffic (Jabbar 2016:17). Since the purpose of digital signage is to increase interaction and impact on shoppers, it must be placed at locations that are easy to access and offer natural pause points (Dwyer 2017:33). The entrance of the shopping mall is another key strategic area for placing digital signs (Abidin & Aziz 2012:361), due to the potential high foot traffic and opportunity to enhance consumer shopping experiences (Meziani & Hussien 2017). Shopping mall managers therefore typically place these screens around entrances, exits, food courts, parking lots, mall restrooms as well as near escalators and elevators (Miller 2017:1). Sung (2016:1) agrees and indicates that food courts and central areas that are convenient and act as gathering spaces for shoppers are good places for screens. Placement in these areas allows digital signage to be visible inside the shopping mall and attract the attention of shoppers while browsing in the mall space.

Interaction with the audience

According to Bauer, Kryvinska & Strauss (2016: 287), interaction with the audience refers to the manner in which viewers are able to reciprocate the information or instructions displayed on the digital screens. The level of interaction of a mobile audience with digital signage is influenced by design attractiveness and interactive features, as reviewed below.

Attractiveness of digital signage design

Digital signage that is poorly designed or mounted haphazardly can tarnish the appearance of any space, create ineffective messaging and do a disservice to a great marketing opportunity (Polger & Stempler 2014:67). If digital signage is attractively designed, on the other hand, it has the potential to capture the attention of passers-by and create positive atmospherics (Dennis, Michon & Newman 2010:205). Appealing contemporary digital signage inside shopping malls have been proven to add to the modern appeal and distinctiveness of these commercial spaces (Dennis et al., 2014:25). It can be employed to make a positive impression on visitors, capture their attention and offer them an opportunity to engage with content (Want & Schilit, 2012:21).

Interactive features

- Conceptualising interactivity

Researchers from fields as diverse as communication instrumental technology, human computer interactivity and marketing have defined and studied interactivity (Bea et al. 2016:362). Interactivity has consequently been defined in different ways. Some scholars focus on the objective features of a medium when describing interactivity. For instance, Lui & Shrum (2002:55) define interactivity as the degree to which two parties can engage in dialogue through communication mediums as the degree to which the message is synchronised. In this context interactivity is regarded as a computerised communication system that allows the exchange of roles between the sender and receiver. Interactivity is thus regarded as an objective feature that can be measured through observing the number of interactive features of the technology (Voorveld, Neijens & Smit 2011:74).

Other scholars focus on the subjective experience of interactivity by users of a medium. In this context interactivity is regarded as a psychological experience that users experience when they engage with a technological system, such as websites or interactive digital signage (Wu 2006:42). In other words, perceived interactivity is based on users' perceptions (Bae et al. 2016:323), rather than the objective features of the medium. Perceived interactivity typically relies on the experience a user encounters when engaging with digital signage. Wu (2006:91) distinguishes between three fundamental factors of perceived interactivity namely: i) perceived control, where consumers perceive themselves to have control over the content, navigation and the place of interactivity; ii) perceived responsiveness, which facilitates how the consumer perceives the medium to respond to his or her request or input; and iii) perceived personalisation that refers to the extent to which consumers perceive the response to be customised and appropriate to his or her request. Therefore, perceived interactivity is a subjective experience and is also referred to as experiential interactivity (Lui & Shrum 2002:55).

- Interaction possibilities with digital signage

Interaction possibilities with digital signage could enhance consumer value by raising consumer engagement or emotional perception (Bauer et al. 2011:292). Dennis et al. (2014:2243) distinguish between digital signage offering interactivity through touch screens and those using mobile devices integrated through near-field connection. Figure 3a illustrates a LCD touch screen displaying a L'Oreal advertisement. It is integrated with live camera feed so that

when customers walk towards the digital screen, the camera automatically captures the lower face of the customer and then recommends a suitable shade of lipstick according to the tone of their skin colour. Customers can also touch the screen to experience how they appear with different lipstick colours. It can be used with mobile devices to access information or advertisements on digital signage.

Figure 3b illustrates how digital signage equipped with interactive quick response (QR) codes allows interaction with mobile devices. This multi-screen display allows brands to deliver information via digital signage and mobile devices. Interactive digital signage can thus enable consumers to engage with products or brands in an enjoyable and playful way (Liebenberg, 2012:243). This also offers advertisers accurate measurement data that can used to improve the customisation of their offerings (Curran, Millar & Mc Garvey 2012:377; The Interactive Advertising Bureau 2016:7, Roggeven et al. 2016:215).

FIGURE 3
DIGITAL SIGNAGE INTERACTIVE FEATURES

a) LCD touch screens with cameras
Source: Nachojc (2011)

b) Digital signage offering interactivity via mobile devices
Source: OnActivity (2011)

c) Digital signage that tracks human emotions and gesture recognition
Source: Ziico (2016)

Dynamic engaging content that is customised based on facial recognition software and traffic patterns can also be applied to increase consumers' level of attention and enjoyment (Kelsen 2013:75). The German food brand, depicted in Figure 3d, applied interactive digital signage to create an exciting consumer experience. The company installed digital signage in shopping centres to encourage consumer interaction through playing games that read the facial expressions, emotions and gestures of consumers. Consumers who participated in the games also received vouchers as reward (Ziicon 2015).

She, Crowcroft, Fu & and Li (2014:13) advise that the efficacy of interactive dynamic digital signage content should be tracked across different consumer behaviour stages: i) attraction (i.e. awareness and actions performed in preparation to engagement with interactive digital signage); ii) interaction (i.e. activities to explore and access the digital signage content); and iii) conation (i.e. the impact on behaviour after interaction with digital signage).

Roux (2018:35) recommends a few possibilities regarding the interaction with digital signage in a South African context. She explains that digital signage can be used to detect demographic characteristics of particular shoppers and their specific location within the mall environment. This information can then be used to place customised and relevant messages in spaces where the target customers are likely to be most receptive. This can be done if they opt to be identified via their mobile phone or RFID cards when they pass the signage, which then determines which content to show on the basis of the consumer's information as well as contextual factors (Bauer et al., 2011:292). Digital signage can also be integrated with mobile devices to transmit pertinent real-time information to shoppers.

Research on digital signage interactivity

Consumers' interaction with digital signage has been examined by only a few scholars. Schaeffer (2012:112) found that digital signage interactivity influences consumer engagement. Bea et al. (2012:328) conducted a study on the uses of and gratification with digital signage, the results of which showed that the engagement of consumers with digital signage is motivated by five factors namely: entertainment, information, o pass the time while waiting for something, participation and relaxation. Bauer et al. (2011:69) assert that consumers can be motivated to interact with digital signage if they are provided with the right message at the right time. Another study by Hough, Bea & and Yun (2016:322) on the behavioural intentions of consumers to interact with digital signage showed that consumers interact with digital signage to acquire convenient, useful, relevant, customised information and benefits, but not necessarily for the benefit of entertainment. Thus, interaction will only occur if consumers perceive digital signage content as valuable or beneficial in a specific context.

FURTHER RESEARCH AVENUES

This article is the first of its kind to propose message execution and media placement guidelines for current and potential users of digital signage, thereby contributing to the limited body of knowledge on the evolution of contemporary OOH advertising. It also lays the foundation for various further research avenues. The wide range of opportunities offered by different digital signage content types deserves further attention. It would, for example, be valuable for scholastic researchers from multiple disciplines to assess how effective formats and content types (e.g. aesthetic art, public safety or emergency information) can be designed and applied, and to determine which content the public finds most valuable at different locations and time periods.

Another opportunity is to create experiments to compare the impact of digital display quality, sizes, placement and designs at different places (e.g. retailers, airports, clinics, government offices, higher education campuses and sport stadiums). The potential drawbacks of interactive digital signage, such as privacy issues and information overload, are other areas that deserve future research.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the existing academic literature revealed a lack of appreciation for digital signage applications and opportunities in the current academic literature. It also revealed the lack of a proper orderly, integrated codification basis to describe and research the features of this promising contemporary digital platform. For that reason, crucial digital signage, message execution and media placement considerations are examined. Digital signage content options, formats, display quality and interactive features were discussed, and relevant research findings were examined. It is envisaged that advertisers, mall owners and even non-governmental organisations can use the proposed considerations as guidelines when designing message executions or evaluating media placement options.

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How fashion bloggers can influence Generation Y's online behaviour

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine how fashion bloggers can influence Generation Y's online behaviour. Fashion blogs give the fashion industry a unique opportunity to reach out to a target audience in a new, easy, and inexpensive way, however, research on how fashion bloggers can influence Generation Y's online behaviour is still limited. Based on various theories, a model was proposed for the study. A survey involving 300 fashion blog readers as participants was analysed in the empirical study to investigate whether perceived blog design layout, blogger awareness, perceived blogger credibility and perceived value/expertise influence attitude and purchase intention. Structural equation modelling results revealed that the proposed relationships were significant with the exception of blog design layout on attitude. As for blog design layout, marketing strategies could emphasise the importance of user experience and content strategy in influencing the attitude of Generation Y. The study should assist fashion bloggers to understand how perceived blog design layout, blogger awareness, perceived blogger credibility and perceived value/expertise can influence attitude, eventually leading to purchase intention. Brands will therefore need to select bloggers cautiously. This study has implications for bloggers, brands, and policy makers.

Keywords: Online behaviour, blog, blogging, blogger, fashion blog, fashion blogger, fashion blogging, fashion, online marketing, user experience, content strategy, attitude, Generation Y, South Africa

INTRODUCTION

Today, the largest segment of the blogosphere consists of fashion blogs, i.e. blogs that focus on fashion brands, fashion products, street style, and personal style (Halvorsen, Hoffmann, Coste-Manière & Stankeviciute, 2013). Fashion bloggers constitute a new player in the fashion industry (Esteban-Santos, García, Carey, & Bellido-Pérez, 2018; Sadaba & SanMiguel, 2016; Rocamora, 2011; Allen, 2009). Fashion bloggers are individuals with a fashion blog, where they write and share information about fashion with their community (SanMiguel & Sádaba, 2018). Fashion bloggers are used to deliver information about brands to the target consumers by assessing and interpreting it in such a way that it will communicate acceptance of the message to the consumer (Cantor, 2014). Bloggers in Africa are doing well across the globe, whether it be fashion, beauty, technology or cuisine (Edoro, 2018). In South Africa, new fashion blogs continue to be on the rise, bringing something fresh to the blogosphere (SAFadmin, 2019).

Fashion bloggers: a marketing tool

Currently, fashion and trends are mainly driven by inspiration between peers; it is therefore likely that fashion blogs may function as a source of influence to affect consumer behaviour (Halvorsen, et al., 2013). Blogs are therefore an influential social media platform and a powerful marketing tool (Pophal, 2015; Duffy & Hund, 2015; Vineyard, 2014; Hsu, Chuan-Chuan & Chiang, 2013; Hsu & Tsou, 2011). Bloggers inspire the way people dress as they work alongside publishers and designers (Sadaba & SanMiguel, 2016). According to Esteban-Santos, et al. (2018), fashion bloggers should focus on giving accurate and new information, as well as including vivid and interesting content, in order to maintain their reputation and catch the attention of their followers. Blogs are therefore crucial in the decision-making processes of consumers (Al-Masri & Yani-de-Soriano, 2018; Esteban-Santos, et al. 2018; Hsu, et al. 2013), as fashion bloggers' recommendations can modify consumers' attitudes towards brands, influencing how consumers perceive them and therefore, their brand choices (Lee & Watkins, 2016). By sharing their personal style and inspiring their followers with what they wear on popular social media platforms such as Instagram, fashion bloggers have become fashion opinion leaders (Zain, Perry & Quinn, 2018). Both readers and bloggers use fashion blogs as their main source of fashion inspiration (Halvorsen, et al. 2013).

Fashion bloggers and Generation Y of the 21st century

Fashion trends change rapidly in the 21st century as the Generation Y of the 21st century are equipped with more interactive and revolutionising communication links that react faster to international and local trends (Ghemawat & Nueno, 2006). Consumers of Generation Y have immediate access to a wide variety of online goods, exchange brand experiences and are able to purchase fashion freely on the internet through the help of fashion blogs and the rising empire of online shopping companies (Okonkwo, Griffith, Belue, Lanza, Zamrini, Harrell, Brockington, Clark, Raman & Marson, 2007). These consumers are demanding and purchase clothes that really suit their needs and they care about meaning, ethics and genuineness (Djelic & Ainamo, 1999). Marketers must be aware that these young consumers rely more on this non-traditional media, because they look for genuine and honest recommendations formed by peer consumers (Esteban-Santos, et al., 2018) and are influenced by blogs (Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels, Kabadayi, Gruber, Komarova & Solnet, 2013).

The purpose of conducting the study and selecting Generation Y is explained next.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

There are over 500 million blogs on the internet, and a new blog post is published every 0.5 seconds (Blogging Statistics, 2019). Some bloggers are reported to have as many as 250 million social media followers (Hsu, Chuan-Chuan & Chiang, 2013), while some have fan bases larger than the blogs and social media accounts of major fashion magazines (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Fashion blogs first appeared in 2001 (Pedroni, 2015). Due to the important influence of fashion blogs and the implication on marketing activities, it is a vital area to study. Attempts have been made to understand how fashion blogs function as a marketing tool in some western and eastern regions (Luvaas, 2013; Halvorsen, et al., 2013), although limited studies have been specifically conducted on how fashion bloggers can influence Generation Y in South Africa. The present study contributes by examining two theories being Brand Equity Theory and the Theory of Reasoned action. The study starts by describing the two theories, after which the hypotheses and conceptual model are developed from literature.

Similar studies have been conducted in the South African context (Van Huyssteen, Strydom & Rudansky-Kloppers, 2015; Bosch, 2012), but there have been few academic studies on fashion blogger influence and Generation Y. In this

study, we answer the calls for further research by focusing on how Generation Y responds to blog marketing (Liljander, Gummerus & Söderlund, 2015). Generation Y grew up with technology and rely on it for information, entertainment and social contacts (Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels, Kabadayi, Gruber, Komarova Loureiro & Solnet, 2013). They rely on online product reviews and recommendations (Karrh, McKee & Pardun, 2003), which demonstrates that blogs are an important source of information in their decision making (Liljander, et al., 2015). Hence, the aim of this paper is to investigate how fashion bloggers can influence Generation Y's online behaviour.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

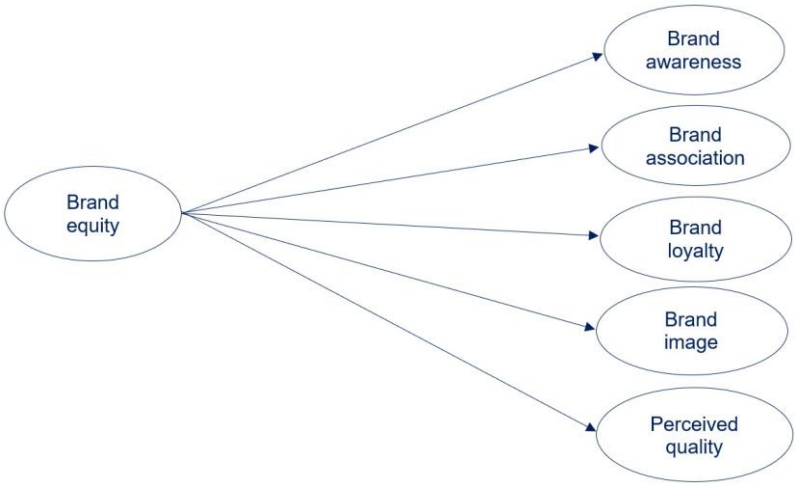
As the objective of the study was to understand how fashion bloggers influence Generation Y's online behaviour, it was considered appropriate to adopt two theories, namely Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Brand Equity Theory (Aaker, 1992) to position the study. The Theory of Reasoned Action was originally developed by Fishbein in the 1960s. It was then expanded by the original author and Icek Ajzen in the mid-1980s. The theory states that a person's attitude or behaviour toward acting in a certain manner are very powerful in determining his or her intention of performing (Xu & Paulins, 2005). The Theory of Reasoned Action focuses on theoretical variables concerned with individual motivational factors as factors of the probability of performing a specific behaviour. The theory assumes the best forecaster of a behaviour is intention, which in turn, is determined by attitude toward the behaviour and social normative perceptions regarding it. Accordingly, Ajzen (1991) added perceived behavioural control to the theory of reasoned action as justification for factors outside an individual's control that could possibly affect intentions and behaviour as it is unclear which theory of reasoned action variables predict behaviour in which cognitive control is reduced.

The second theory; Brand Equity theory, according to Aaker (1991, 1996), has come to dominate the empirical research, perhaps because his framework is more practically useful and more easily operationalised and measured (Anselmsson, Johansson & Persson, 2007).

For the purpose of this study, brand equity can be described as illustrated in Figure 1.

According to Aaker (2018), brand equity comprises brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty, brand image and perceived quality.

FIGURE 1
BRAND EQUITY MODEL



Source: (Aaker, 1991)

Blog design layout

A blog refers to a web page that contains regularly posted inlays that are achieved and arranged in reversed chronological order (Wright & Hinson, 2008). This can include anything from an online diary to a more interactive page (Walker, 2007). A crucial factor regarding a blog, if not one of the most important appearance factors is the blog design layout. It is the first interaction between the user and the blogger and represents the initial first impression (Wright & Hinson, 2008). The characteristics of the blog design layout or visual design include attractiveness, organisation, proper use of font, colour, and attractive use of multimedia. Visual design can be referred to as the way in which the information is presented through the use of elements such as typography, graphical use, colour, and layout (Wright & Hinson, 2008). Blog design layout serves as an indirect voice to a blog and its aesthetic (Rocamora, 2011). The layout is vital and essential in delivering a statement of substance, value and appeal towards the consumer.

Perceived value/expertise

"We read their pieces because we value their opinions and ideas" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, p. 182). Perceived value is defined as a consumer's opinion about a product's overall excellence or superiority (Tsiotsou, 2005). According to Zeithaml (1988, p. 14) value is "the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product or service based on perceptions of what is received and what is given". Essentially, it can be defined as the consumer's overall opinion of a brand, product or service's value in comparison to alternatives (Friedmann, Son & Saleem, 2015). It becomes evident that bloggers need to create a favourable interaction and experience in order to create long lasting value impressions and promote knowledgeable insight in their interactions, therefore perceived value or perceived expertise can also be referred to as the perceived knowledge on a given topic. The value factor in social media blogging is critical in influencing whether a consumer will act upon or support what they observe or not. It further determines whether or not a consumer will be attracted to a blogging source or purchasing intention. If value is not determined or created in any form, the success of the relationship between the consumer and blogger will not be recognised (Walker, 2007).

Perceived credibility of blogger

Fashion bloggers have the ability to influence purchase decisions because they are likely to be viewed as a credible source by their readers (Haugtvedt, Machleit, & Yalch, 2005). Credibility refers to the ability to influence through trust and proficiency (Epega, 2007). A blog is only as worthy as its credibility (Efimova, 2009). Bloggers attract followers, viewers, readers, subscribers, but most importantly, loyalty, through their interactions. Bloggers need to ensure that they always remain true to themselves to ensure they are able to appeal to viewers who can relate to and impart valuable input into their actions. According to Epanga (2007), viewers will promote and retain a blogger's influence, only through reliability and credibility. Consumers have created the habit of finding bloggers' recommendations significantly more credible than other media sources (Johnson, 2004).

Awareness of the blogger

Awareness is the ability of potential buyers to recall the brand from its product category when customers are exposed to various specific brand-related stimuli, such as brand name, typefaces, slogans, mascots, and brand characters in which the brand competes and can link products sold under the brand name (Keller, 2001; Aaker, 1996). Awareness can be seen as the degree to which consumers are acquainted and comfortable with the ease of access and convenience of information and knowledge about fashion bloggers. The higher the level of awareness, the higher the blogger's reputation would be amongst competitors in the marketplace (Malik, Willett & Hu, 2013).

Awareness essentially allows a consumer to experience the brand of a fashion blogger through the use of advertising, publicity, as well as public interaction. Social media creates a platform for fashion bloggers to expose and express their thoughts, ideas and opinions to their followers (Wright & Hinson, 2008). Awareness links into brand awareness and existing knowledge a consumer has on a specific brand, which are brand awareness and brand recall – this assists the consumer in influencing purchase intention (Efimova, 2009).

Attitude

Attitude can be defined as an individual's favourable or unfavorable assessments or feelings towards an idea or object (Aman, Harun & Hussein, 2012). Attitudes are further defined as psychological tendencies that are shown, based on marketing efforts or endorsement towards a particular object with a degree of further favour or disfavour (Aman, et al., 2012). In the context of fashion blogging, attitude is defined as the tendency to favour or disfavour a particular product, brand, idea or object in reaction to a fashion blogger's appeal and persuasion (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011).

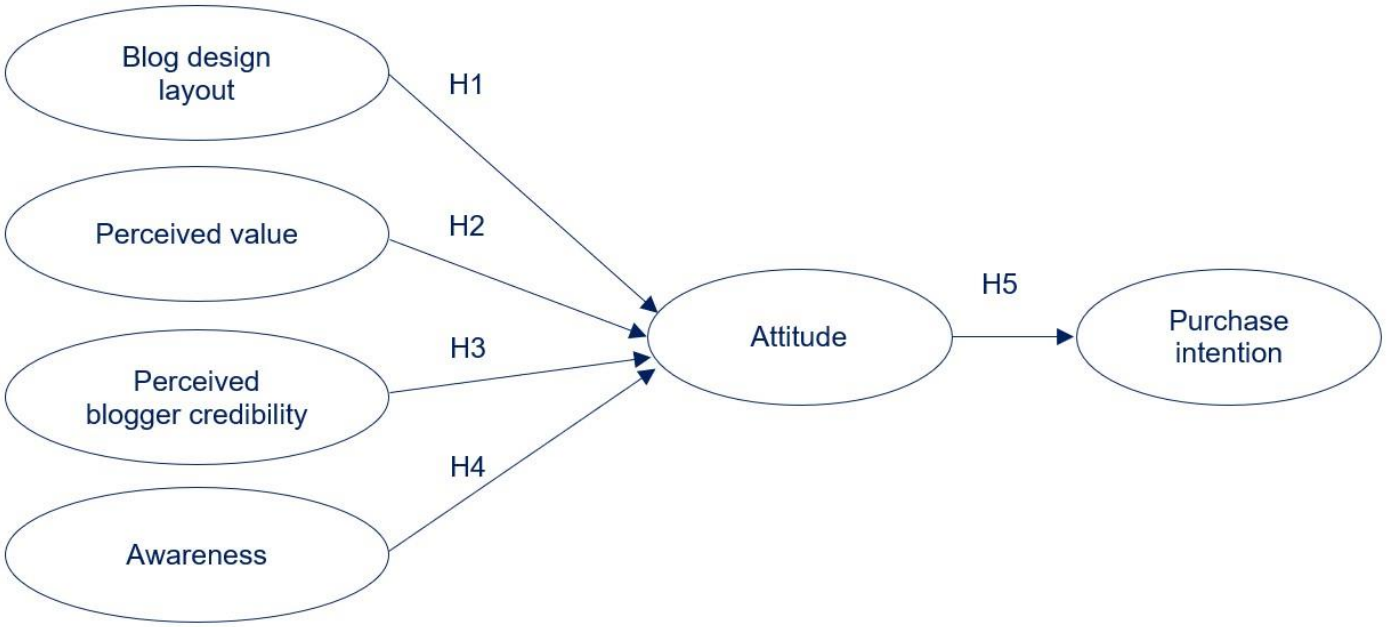
Purchase intention

Purchase intention measures the likelihood that consumers will buy a product after being exposed to a blog and can be defined as a consumer's willingness to learn about and purchase a product or service (Salisbury, Pearson, Pearson & Miller, 2001). According to Kim and Ko (2010), in the context to fashion blogging, purchase intention can be defined as the likelihood and willingness of a consumer to give special consideration to products based on the endorsement or recommendation by a fashion blogger or influencer (Kim & Ko, 2010). According to Mirabi, Akbariyeh and Tahmasebifard (2015), purchase intention refers to the decision making that suggests a reason to respond or buy a particular brand or product or when a consumer plans to buy a specific product, based on specific causes and conditions. Purchase intention can be seen and described as 'evaluations' that consumers make about products which impact on the decisions to be a good or service (Efimova, 2009). Purchase intention also refers to the likelihood that a customer will buy a particular product or service (Fishbein, 1975).

CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Figure 2 presents the proposed conceptual model for the present study, followed by the hypotheses development.

FIGURE 2
CONCEPTUAL MODEL



Source: (Authors own construction, 2019)

Hypotheses Development

Blog Design Layout and Attitude (Hypothesis 1)

A study by Robins, Holmes and Stansbury (2010) on the appearances of web pages indicated that visual design could possibly alter or affect a user's attitude or perception of credibility. Hence, it is beneficial for the blogging industry to have a clear and concise understanding of the impact of visuals on how people reach ideas or initial perceptions and attitudes (Lester, 2006). Because visual images can directly affect emotions (Lester, 2006) and because emotion plays an important role in influencing attitude, it becomes vital for bloggers to generate and preserve visually appealing blogs that allow for the retention of clients. As such, we hypothesise that:

H1: There is a positive relationship between blog design layout and attitude.

Perceived Value and Attitude (Hypothesis 2)

If value is not established in any form, the success of the relationship between the consumer and source will not be established and therefore attitude will not be affected (Walker & Rettberg, 2007). It is vitally important that bloggers instill value in their users through their interactions, content and knowledge, in order for them to influence the attitudes of their users and ultimately drive purchase intention. As a result, we hypothesise that:

H_2: There is a positive relationship between perceived value and attitude.

Perceived Credibility of blogger and Attitude (Hypothesis 3)

If consumers do not find credibility in the blogger or the content presented to them, they will not be influenced and their attitudes will be negatively affected (Pihl & Sandström, 2013). Authenticity and reliability drive and promote favourable attitudes (Pihl & Sandström, 2013). Consumers have created a habit of finding bloggers' recommendations significantly more credible than other media sources (Johnson, 2004). Many bloggers have created a strong reputation, based on their knowledge of the fashion industry, and are able to maintain this reputation through their imparting of knowledge on brands, trends and general guidance. Therefore, perceived credibility is an important and vital driver of attitude changing. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H_3: There is a positive relationship between perceived credibility of the blogger and attitude.

Awareness and Attitude (Hypothesis 4)

Researchers such as Prendergast, Ko, and Siu Yin (2010) found that the positive attitude towards an online forum strengthens the purchase intention of the products discussed. A study by Ing and Ting (2018) found that a change in perceived usefulness, trustworthiness, perceived benefits and information quality can lead to a change in attitude towards bloggers' recommendations which, in turn, changes the purchase intention. Awareness links into brand awareness and existing knowledge a consumer has on a specific brand, which is known as brand awareness and brand recall – this awareness assists in the influence of purchase intention and attitude (Wright & Hinson, 2008). As such, we hypothesise that:

H4: There is a positive relationship between awareness and attitude.

Attitude and Purchase Intention (Hypothesis 5)

Numerous studies on social media and fashion blogging have shown a significant relationship between attitude and intention (Kim, Shin & Kim, 2011; Bhattacherjee 2000). In the context of fashion blogging, attitude is defined as the tendency to favour or disfavour a particular product, brand, idea or object in reaction to a fashion blogger's appeal or persuasion (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011). Purchase intention is driven by many significant variables, both internal and external (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011). One of the most noteworthy drivers of purchase intention is attitude; if one's attitude towards an idea or material object is significantly altered, purchase intention can also be altered alongside the attitude change (Carter, 2016). As a result, we hypothesise that:

H5: There is a positive relationship between attitude and purchase intention.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study followed a positivist approach in examining the relationships between the dependent and independent variables. The measurement instrument was compiled from numerous existing scales that were adapted for the purpose of the study. Reliability and validity were established, followed by structural equation modelling (SEM) that was used to test the model fit. Hypotheses testing and path modelling was conducted. The descriptive statistics were obtained through SPSS 25 software and SEM was done using Amos 25 software.

Sample and data collection

Data was collected from 300 Generation Y university students in South Africa. Boomsma and Hoogland (2001) suggest that when using Structural Equation Modelling as a measurement model, the minimum size of a sample should be at least 200 to see favourable and realistic results. In light of this, the current study's sample size is 300.

Measurement instrument and questionnaire design

The data was collected through an online self-administered structured questionnaire using Google docs. All scales were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The variables were measured using existing scales; Blog design layout (Al-Qeisi, 2014), Awareness (Pihl & Sandström, 2013), Perceived blogger credibility (Flanagin & Metzger, 2007), Perceived value (Zeithaml, 1988), Attitude (Wu & Lo, 2009) and Purchase intention (Wu & Lo, 2009).

Data Analysis and Results

This section provides an overview of the respondent profile, the scale accuracy analysis, the model fit and hypotheses results.

Respondent Profile

The profile of the participants is presented in Table 1.

The profile indicates that the majority of the respondents (54%) were female, 45% were male, while the remaining 1% preferred not to say. Eighty two percent were between the ages of 18 and 25 years, with 10% between the ages of 26 and 30, while very small percentage (6%) fell into the age group of 31 to older category. The majority (99%) of the respondents use Instagram and at least one other social media platform, 0% of respondents selected that they used none of the above social media platforms, therefore proving that every respondent uses at least one social media platform.

Regarding social media importance, 87% of respondents cumulatively found social media interaction in their daily routines to be important, whereas 9% found social media usage to be slightly important and 2% of respondents did not find it important. Therefore, 98% of respondents find some value or importance of social media in their daily interaction.

The respondents were given options of buying decisions, 48% of the respondents found that social

TABLE 1
SAMPLE PROFILE CHARACTERISTICS

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	136	45.3%
	Female	163	54.3%
	Prefer not to say	1	0.4%
	Total	**300**	**100.0%**
Age	18-21	101	33.7%
	21-25	149	49.7%
	26-30	30	10%
	31-35	14	4.7%
	35 - Older	6	2%
	Total	**300**	**100.0%**
Social Media Usage	Instagram	297	99%
	Twitter	255	85%
	Tumblr	111	37%
	Facebook	230	76%
	Snapchat	238	79%
	Pinterest	180	60%
	YouTube	184	61%
	None of the above	0	0%
	Total	**300**	**100%**
Importance of Social media	Very Important	149	49%
	Important	116	38%
	Slightly Important	28	9%
	Not Important	7	2%
	Total	**300**	**100.0%**
Blogger Influence	Yes	243	81%
	No	157	19%
	Total	**300**	**100.0%**

media and social media trends influence their buying decisions and 26% of the respondents were influenced by bloggers or influencers, giving a cumulative influence from social media or bloggers of 74% of the respondents.

Scale Accuracy Analysis

The scale accuracy analysis is presented in Table 2 and is followed by a discussion of the measurement scale's reliability and validity.

TABLE 2
ACCURACY ANALYSIS SCALE

Research Construct	Descriptive Statistics				Cronbach's Test		C.R. value	AVE value	Highest Shared Variance	Factor Loading
	Mean Value		Standard Deviation	Item -total	α value					
Blog design layout (BDL)	B1	1.98	1.9975	0.95175	0.612	0.894	0.895	0.833	0.408	,643
	B2	1.74			0.723					,770
	B3	2.24			0.642					,666
	B4	1.93			0.755					,795
	B5	2.42			0.497					,526
	B6	1.83			0.701					,747
	B7	1.98			0.748					,807
	B8	1.86			0.69					,771
Awareness (AOB)	C1	2.09	1.6075	0.794875	0.789	0.916	0.901	0.729	0.558	,783
	C2	2.14			0.743					,792
	C3	2.19			0.767					,805
	C4	1.95								,657
	C5	2.1			0.776					,750
	C6	2.39			0.764					,864
Perceived blogger credibility (PCOB)	D1	2.63	1.84	0.826875	0.838	0.944	0.942	0.833	0.477	,832
	D2	2.52			0.812					,789
	D3	2.41			0.864					,891
	D4	2.38								,899
	D5	2.39			0.868					,920
	D6	2.39			0.743					,789
Perceived value (PVOB)	E1	2	1.035	0.458	0.619	0.84	0.843	0.756	0.591	,702
	E2	2.14			0.687					,794
	E3	2.02			0.672					,721
	E4	2.12			0.718					,807
Attitude (ATT)	F1	2.14	1.38	0.603875	0.723	0.896	0.902	0.768	0.838	,760
	F2	2.13			0.745					,823
	F3	2.12			0.751					,791
	F4	2.23			0.756					,805
	F5	2.42			0.743					,843
Purchase intention (PI)	G1	2.34	1.50625	0.6635	0.843	0.927	0.922	0.811	0.666	,885
	G2	2.2			0.794					,815
	G3	2.7			0.822					,847
	G4	2.5			0.84					,877
	G5	2.31			0.748					,759

NB:CR=Composite reliability; AVE= Average variance extracted

Testing for scale reliability and validity

To assess reliability and validity of the measurement scales for the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the composite reliability test and a comparison between the average variance extracted and the highest shared variance were conducted respectively (Table 2). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients range from 0.84 to 0.944, exceeding the 0.7 threshold as suggested by Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2009). Composite reliability values range from 0.843 to 0.942 which is acceptable as it exceeds 0.7 (Hair et al., 2009). All the average variance extracted values range between 0.729 and 0.833, which is above 0.4 as recommended by Fraering and Minor (2006).

TABLE 3
INTER CONSTRUCT CORRELATION MATRIX

	Blog design layout (BDL)	Awareness (AOB)	Perceived blogger credibility (PCOB)	Perceived value (PVOB)	Attitude (ATT)	Purchase intention (PI)
Blog design layout (BDL)	1					
Awareness (AOB)	.639**	1				
Perceived blogger credibility (PCOB)	.554**	.700**	1			
Perceived value (PVOB)	.587**	.747**	.691**	1		
Attitude (ATT)	.576**	.751**	.828**	.769**	1	
Purchase intention (PI)	.542**	.763**	.816**	.723**	.838**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results obtained in Table 3 indicate that all the inter-correlation values move away from 1.0 and therefore all the correlations can be regarded as significant. The highest difference between two constructs, which is the lowest value and shows that the weakest linear relationship, is that of purchase intention (0.542), as well as perceived blogger credibility (0.554).

Assessing measurement model fit

This section presents the analysis of model fit by means of assessing various indices to determine the degree of an acceptable or good model fit (Table 4). The following indices are examined: normed fit index (NFI), incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), goodness of fit index (GFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Table 4 presents the results of the model fit indices.

TABLE 4
MODEL FIT INDICES

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	,880	,865	,930	,921	,930

An exploration of the baseline comparison indices indicates the following observations: The NFI (0.880) falls between 0.8 and 0.9, which explains a marginally accepted and good model fit (Kenny, 2016). The RFI suggests a good model fit with a value of 0.865 and the IFI (0.930), TLI (0.921) and CFI (0.930) are greater or above the suggested threshold indicated in previous literature of 0.9 (Tabachnick, 2007), therefore the model is regarded as being an appropriate good fit.

It is evident from Table 4 that all the model fit indices reach the required thresholds: the RMSEA indicates a value of 0.064, which is below 0.08, as recommended by McDonald (2002). The CMIN, NFI, RFI, IFI, TLI and CFI all meet the recommended threshold of 0.9 (Hair et al., 2009).

Hypotheses testing results

Table 5 presents the results of the hypotheses and path coefficients, followed by a discussion thereof.

TABLE 5
HYPOTHESES RESULTS AND PATH COEFFICIENTS

Hypothesised Relationship			Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	P Value	Outcome
BDL	→	ATT	H1	-.024	.506	Not supported and not significant
PVOB	→	ATT	H2	. 213	***	Supported and significant
PCOB	→	ATT	H3	.299	***	Supported and significant
AOB	→	ATT	H4	.437	***	Supported and significant
ATT	→	PI	H5	.966	***	Supported and significant

Note: *** = p<0.01

An examination of the results recorded in Table 5 indicates that all of the hypotheses are supported, with the exception of hypothesis one (H1), which examines the relationship between blog design layout and attitude. Contrary to earlier research (Robins, et al., 2010; Lester, 2006), Hypothesis (H1) was not supported, as blog design layout had a non-significant effect on attitude. Interestingly, Hsu, Chen, Yang and Lin (2017), as well as Rocamora (2011), highlighted that blog design layout cannot be isolated from user experience and content strategy.

Hypothesis (H2) indicates a positive relationship between perceived value provided by the fashion blogger and attitude. Students are therefore more likely to have a positive attitude towards purchase intention, if the perceived value provided by the fashion blogger is high. The path co-efficient (0.213) indicated a moderately strong relationship between these two variables. Wu and Wang (2005) contended that the user's perceived value is positively associated with the user's attitudes.

Hypothesis (H3) indicates a positive relationship between perceived credibility of the blog attached to the fashion blogger and attitude. In other words, the greater the perceived credibility of the blog attached to the fashion blogger, the more favourable the students' attitude. The path co-efficient (0.299) indicated a moderately strong relationship between these two variables. This finding is consistent with Ostermeier (1967), who provides clear evidence that the user's perceived credibility of a fashion blogger is positively associated with the user's attitudes. Bloggers' recommendation are perceived to be honest, showing a high credibility, credibility has a significant relation to consumers' behaviour (Esteban-Santos, et al. 2018). Similarly, hypothesis four (H4) indicates a relationship between awareness provided by the fashion blogger and the students' attitude towards purchase intention (path co-efficient 0.437), which is consistent with previous literature by Percy and Rossiter (1992).

Lastly, hypothesis five (H5) shows a strong relationship between attitude and purchase intention (path co-efficient of 0.966). Previous literature by Hutter, Hautz, Dennhardt, and Füller (2013) supports this, thereby providing adequate evidence that the user's attitudes towards fashion bloggers is positively associated with the user's purchase intention.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study indicate that the blog design layout, awareness of the blogger, perceived value and credibility of the blogger are important variables to users when factoring the influence that a blogger has on its user. Fashion blogging techniques are becoming increasingly popular and social media usage is starting to overtake even that of the internet usage on traditional personal computers (Marketing charts, 2014); it is therefore important for literature to address the possible marketing opportunities that may stem from this emerging technology.

Fashion bloggers and influencers increase awareness of the organisation by acting as self-advertising agents (Martin, 2011), and studies have specified that the inclusion of social media activity by businesses promotes brand loyalty and purchase intention (Park, 2011). The development of traditional marketing campaigns have become a lot more expensive and require considerable time and effort by firms in comparison to outsourcing creativity and expertise from fashion bloggers (Drury, 2008), and therefore it can be said that developing a successful network with fashion bloggers or influencers, which customers will follow and continue to trust, is vital for the business.

LIMITATIONS AND AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this study makes some practical and theoretical contribution to consumption behaviour, brand management and digital marketing, it is not without limitations. Firstly, the use of a student sample appears to be acceptable in the online marketing content, however, student samples are generally criticised for not being sufficiently representative of the breadth of the population. Thus, future research should consider replicating these findings using a sample drawn from a wider population. Secondly, a longitudinal research study may consequently be more appropriate to study a longer-term perspective, compared to the cross-sectional study that was applied in this study. Thirdly, the current study was administered only in South Africa and could be conducted in other developed and developing geographies. Finally, additional variables such as user experience and content strategy could also be examined.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study intended to investigate the influence of fashion bloggers on Generation Ys' purchase intention. By means of a quantitative study, online surveys were completed by 300 Generation Y students at a university in South Africa. A conceptual model proposed that blog design layout, awareness, perceived blogger credibility, perceived value, influence the students' attitude towards purchase intention of fashion items. The study established that the relationships were significant except for blog design layout. Literature indicates that blog design layout should be measured together with blog content and user experience. If fashion bloggers design their layout with well-organised content to attract consumers browsing the blog, it may significantly arouse consumers' positive attitudes toward it. The study provides bloggers and marketers of fashions brands with a clear understanding of what factors sway the likelihood of Generation Y to be influenced by fashion bloggers.

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Customer engagement in retail banks: Scale development and validation

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ABSTRACT

The retail banking industry of South Africa is facing various challenges. Due to the direct influence that these banks have on the country's economic stability, retail banks need to remain sustainable. Progressively, more businesses are recognising the importance of customer engagement due to the various benefits of having engaged customers, including improved annual revenue. Consequently, the purpose of this paper is to develop a multi-item scale to measure customer engagement in the South African retail banking industry. The paper considered both the existing literature and a quantitative descriptive design.

The target population included customers of the main South African retail banks in the Johannesburg metropolitan area. Furthermore, non-probability, convenience and quota sampling techniques were used to draw the sample and reliability, and validity tests were implemented to refine the items statistically. The study contributed a valid and reliable 14-item customer engagement scale, which can guide retail banks to improve their customer engagement and gain a competitive advantage in this challenging industry. Correspondingly, this paper contributes to the theory and practice with specific reference to customer engagement in South African retail banks.

Keywords: customer engagement; retail banking; banking industry; scale development; South Africa

INTRODUCTION

The concept of customer engagement is receiving increasing attention from practitioners and academics alike (Bowden, 2009; Van Doorn, Lemon, Mittal, Nass, Pick, Pirner, and Verhoef, 2010; Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric, and Ilic, 2011; Hollebeek, 2011; Kumar, Pozza, and Ganesh, 2013; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Pansari and Kumar, 2017; Roy, Balaji, Soutar, Lassar, and Roy, 2018; Moliner, Monferrer, and Estrada-Guillen, 2018). This is, in part, due to the growth of the Internet and social media, which brings about high levels of interactivity between managers, practitioners and customers (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric, and Ilic 2011, 252; So, King, and Sparks 2014, 304). In addition, customers are showing an enhanced desire to participate in the co-creation of products and services (Banyte and Dovaliene 2014, 484). These aspects enable businesses to develop and maintain connections with customers beyond the

service encounter – allowing the business to engage with customers, satisfy these customers better and ultimately build loyalty (Moliner, Monferrer, and Estrada-Guillen, 2018, 388; Parihar, Dawra, and Sahay, 2019, 67; So, King, and Sparks, 2014, 305). Evidently, the concept of customer engagement draws on relationship marketing theory and service-dominant logic (Vivek, Beatty, and Morgan 2012, 127), with the main purpose of improving valuable long-term relationships between businesses and customers (Banyte and Dovaliene 2014, 486; Pansari and Kumar, 2017).

Retail banks had to adapt to several significant changes in the last decade, including new technological innovations, changes in customer behaviour, e.g. increased knowledge in technology and, as a result, customers are demanding more transparency within the retail banking environment (Bravo, Martinez, and Pina, 2019, 1253; Csikósová, Čulková, and Janošková, 2016, 5029). Due to the nature of retail banks, having the ability to interact online or offline with their customers, accompanied by customers' desire to participate in the service delivery, South African retail banks should be prospering (Bravo, Martinez, and Pina, 2019, 1253). However, some of the major South African retail banks are experiencing a continuous decrease in market share (Businesstech 2016), which is mainly ascribed to the uncertain economic outlook in South Africa, the ease with which new entrants are entering the market, as well as rising regulatory costs (Fin24 2016; South African Reserve Bank 2016, 3). Since 2015, South African banks have been experiencing even more pressure, as the trust relationship between customers and their banks had been damaged during the financial crisis in 2008 when banks could not provide customised banking products and services to satisfy customer expectations (Springfield 2015). These changes are affecting the banking industry's growth and profitability negatively. The importance of the survival of the main retail banks (Absa, Capitec Bank, FNB, Nedbank and Standard Bank) cannot be overemphasised, as South Africa's economic stability depends on the success of these banks (PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) 2016, 4). According to Pansari and Kumar (2017), fully engaged customers brought in 37% more annual revenue to their primary bank than actively disengaged customers.

For a retail bank to survive and prosper in these challenging conditions, the nurturing of customer engagement is seen as a viable solution, since customer engagement goes beyond awareness, purchase, satisfaction, and retention; it creates collaboration between the customer, the product, service or brand (Ashley, Noble, Donthu, and Lemon 2011, 749; Pansari and Kumar, 2017; Taylor 2011, 2; Vivek et al., 2012, 127). The South African banking industry could benefit from engaged customers, as these customers generally display positive behavioural intentions, such as advocating the bank and its services to others (Javornic and Mandelli 2012, 303). Consequently, a retail bank that can identify engaged and disengaged customers, and have the ability to measure the extent of its customers' engagement, can use this valuable information to its strategic advantage (Sashi 2012, 257).

Limited research has, however, been conducted concerning customer engagement in the retail banking industry (Monferrer, Miliner, and Estrada, 2019, 461). A suitable scale to measure this construct within a South African retail banking context has not yet been developed (Javornic and Mandelli 2012, 301). Such a scale could provide clarity around the concept of customer engagement and could assist South African retail banks in nurturing customer engagement in order to retain customers, attain a competitive advantage, as well as the benefit of customer loyalty and profitability in this challenging environment (Monferrer, Moliner, and Estrada, 2019, 477; Bijmolt, Leeflang, Block, Eisenbeiss, Hardie, Lemmens, and Saffert 2010, 341; Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric, and Ilic, 2011, 260; Javornic and Mandelli 2012, 304; Sashi 2012, 259; Van Doorn 2011, 281; Vivek et al., 2012, 127).

The aim of this study was, therefore, to develop a multi-item scale to measure the extent of customer engagement in the South African retail banking industry. The study contributes a valid and reliable multi-item scale that measures customer engagement in the retail banking industry. The study also contributes to the existing marketing literature and will benefit the South African banking industry by enabling retail banks to measure this construct (as conversed in the discussion section), and successfully implement the scale within their marketing practices by utilising Churchill's (1979) scale development process. The remainder of the article provides an overview of existing literature on the theoretical foundation, conceptualisation and importance of customer engagement, followed by the scale development process, and concludes with the limitations and future research suggestions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical foundation of customer engagement

According to Ashley et al. (2011, 749) and Vivek et al. (2012, 127), the theoretical roots of customer engagement can be observed in the expanded domain of relationship marketing. Over the past decades, the focus of relationship marketing research was primarily on enhancing, retaining and maintaining relationships with customers (Vivek et al., 2012, 127). In this relationship marketing domain, the business is focused on current customers, potential customers, customer communities, customer value, co-creative networks as well as specific interactive experiences (Banyte and Dovaliene 2014, 486; Brodie, Ilic, Juric, and Hollebeek 2013, 106). According to Fierro, Polo, and Oliván (2014, 192), businesses traditionally also focused on the transactional behaviour of customers (i.e. repurchasing, level of use, and the length of the relationship), as these behaviours generally have an instant effect on sales. However, due to the increasingly competitive climate, a renewed approach to managing the business is required, one that focuses on customer relationships and that integrates non-transactional behaviour (i.e. word of mouth, blogging and co-creation) (Rosenbaum, Seger-Guttmann, and Giraldo, 2017, 310; Thakur, 2018, 49). Brodie, Ilic, Juric, and Hollebeek (2013, 106) further note that in relationship marketing theory, consumer behaviour is renowned for being the core of relationships, based on the relationships with all shareholders and their interactive experiences in co-creative situations. These interactive customer experiences form the heart of the customer engagement concept. According to Banyte and Dovaliene (2014, 486), Sashi, Brynildsen, and Bilgihan (2018, 1265), the key function of customer engagement is based on the extended perspective of relationship marketing theory, which reveals the improvement of valuable, long-term relationships with customers and values co-creation.

With the arrival of the Internet and especially social media, which has a high level of interactivity, managers and practitioners in both consumer and business markets are captivated and interested in the concept of customer engagement as a potentially new or different approach to serve and satisfy their customers better (Monferrer, Moliner, and Estrada, 2019, 479; Sashi 2012, 257). Consequently, the customer engagement concept expands the domain of relationship marketing by focusing on greater interactivity and perceived experiential value (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric, and Ilic, 2011, 253).

Conceptualisation of customer engagement

Although numerous scholars in various disciplines specify the significance of customer engagement, a satisfactory definition of what the concept involves does not yet formally exist in marketing literature (Cheung, Shen, Lee, and Chan 2015, 1). As shown in Appendix A, an array of definitions emerged from the marketing literature since 2006.

From the existing customer engagement definitions, it is evident that customer engagement is a multidimensional construct, as various universal elements can be identified within customer engagement theory. The main elements are illustrated in Table 1.

TABLE 1
ELEMENTS OF CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Author(s)	Universal elements of customer engagement
Brodie et al. (2011, 260; 2013, 107), Hollebeek (2011a, 790), Patterson et al. (2006, 1), So et al. (2014, 311)	Customer engagement is characterised by a level of cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity.
Dwivedi (2015, 301), Palmatier et al., 2018, 235), Greve (2014, 203)	Customer engagement is characterised by a degree of vigour, dedication, absorption and interaction.

It can be therefore be derived that customer engagement is a multidimensional construct that goes beyond awareness, purchase, satisfaction and retention, which leads to the creation of loyalty, and is characterised by a level of cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity that is interactive and co-creative in the relationship with a business, which either the customer or the business instigates and can result in positive word of mouth as well as customer loyalty.

Importance of customer engagement

With businesses aiming to survive in a highly competitive, commoditised and over-communicated world with greater media dilution, customer cynicism and customer control than ever before, the importance of engaged customers is significant (Ahn and Back, 2018, 144; Hollebeek, Conduit, and Brodie. 2016, 394; Roberts and Alpert 2010, 198). Firstly, customer engagement provides a platform for businesses to keep customers engaged and involved during the marketing communication process, thereby enabling businesses to mutually beneficial shared control over marketing communications (Tripathi 2014, 126). Secondly, online platforms are providing a setting where customers can discuss, debate, share opinions, criticise and investigate products and services with other customers and peers. These communications are often regarded as more valuable than the communication attempts from the business itself (Fierro, Polo, and Oliván, 2014, 96; Tripathi 2014, 126). Fortunately, with the evolution of the Internet, and social media, in particular, businesses have the opportunity to facilitate interaction and sustained conversations between the customer and the business, which may shape customers and businesses' perceptions and experiences (Sashi, Brynildsen, and Bilgihan, 2019, 1247; Sashi 2012, 255).

Thirdly, amidst the proliferation of goods, customers are getting more overwhelmed, as brands, products and/or services are getting increasingly similar, complicating the differentiation process. The successful application of customer engagement could, however, serve as a possible differentiator between goods and services (Cheung, Shen, Lee, and Chan, 2015, 10). Finally, the importance of customer engagement is also appreciated in the influence that it has on the future of the business, as customer engagement encourages the establishment of customer loyalty, which generates sales and revenue and also strengthens the reputation of the business over the long term (Monferrer, Moliner, and Estrada, 2019, 467; Sashi, Brynildsen, and Bilgihan, 2018, 1265; Fierro, Polo, and Oliván, 2014, 197).

According to Tripathi (2009, 138), most successful businesses are known to build deeply emotional relationships that go beyond rational boundaries with their customers, which motivates customers to stay faithful, trusting and caring towards these brands. Therefore, since customer engagement is conducive to the attainment of superior business outcomes (including sales growth, product quality advances, referrals, co-creative experiences, a rise in customer satisfaction and loyalty, and increased profitability), it is regarded as the key to establishing and sustaining a competitive advantage (Kumar and Pansari 2017; Sashi, Brynildsen, and Bilgihan, 2018, 1265; Banyte and Dovaliene 2014, 484; Brodie, Ilic, Juric, and Hollebeek, 2013, 105).

RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

An exploratory research design was followed, as the study focused on the development of a multi-item scale using Churchill's paradigm (1979) in order to measure the extent of customer engagement in the South African retail banking industry. Various other scale development procedures exist, including the C-OAR-SE scale development procedure developed by Rossiter (2002, 306) as well as the updated paradigm for scale development from Gerbing and Anderson (1988, 191). However, since Churchill's procedure for scale development is widely accepted and respected in marketing, and due to the contribution this procedure has made over the years to developing reliable and valid measurement scales in studies conducted in the field of marketing, such as those by Mimouni-Chaabane and Volle (2010), Seiders et al. (2007) and Taljaard (2013), this procedure was chosen for this particular study.

The target population under consideration for this study comprised adults (20 or older), living in the Johannesburg metropolitan area who had been making use of the retail banking services of one of the main retail banks that dominate the South African retail banking industry (Absa, Capitec Bank, FNB, Nedbank and Standard Bank). As this study aimed to develop a multi-item scale to measure customer engagement, it was deemed appropriate to define the study population in such a way as to ensure that prospective respondents had been customers of one of the major South African retail banks for at least two years, as they already had a relationship with the bank for some time and may already have engaged with the bank on one of the five levels of customer engagement. Since a sampling frame was not readily available for this research, a non-probability convenience sampling method was used. In addition, quota sampling (based on gender, age and race) was implemented. The quota sizes were calculated based on the population size of Johannesburg to ensure that the composition of the sample matches that of the Johannesburg population in terms of gender, age and race.

When developing a multi-item scale, the sample size depends on the number of scale items involved, and as explained by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham (2006), the general rule is that five respondents are needed per item. Therefore, for the first purification step (Study 1), the multi-item scale consisted of 32 items, requiring a minimum sample size of 160 respondents. However, to ensure the collection of sufficient usable questionnaires, as well as to comply with the quotas set for the study, the researchers aimed to collect 240 questionnaires, of which a total of 231 viable questionnaires were collected. With Study 2, the multi-item scale comprised 15 items, therefore requiring a minimum sample size of 75 respondents. Again, to comply with the sample quotas, the aim was to attain 168 questionnaires, of which a total of 152 were collected.

Scale development and purification

Consistent with previous marketing studies (such as Mimouni-Chaabane and Volle 2010; Seiders, Voss, Godfrey, and Grewal 2007; Taljaard 2013) in developing reliable and valid multi-item measures, this study adopted the scale development process of Churchill (1979). The process commenced with the generation of the initial item pool and content validity assessment. This was followed by Study 1, which aimed to refine the scale. In Study 2, the scale was further refined, followed by reliability and validity assessment of the final version of the scale.

Item generation and content validity assessment

From the extensive literature searches, several conceptual definitions regarding customer engagement (listed in Table 1) were considered, from which an initial pool of 85 items was generated. To assess the content validity of the initial item pool, a qualitative experience survey was conducted among 15 respondents with experience in retail banking services. These respondents were, as per the guidelines of Churchill (1979, 67), selected based on personal judgement, and included persons (5x academics, 5x professionals, and 5x consumers) who could offer ideas and insights into the phenomenon of customer engagement within the retail banking context.

During the experience survey, interviewees had to answer three questions relative to their own views: “In your opinion, what is ‘customer engagement’?”, “How would you then define ‘customer engagement’?”, and “From a bank’s perspective, at which point do you think that customers engage with their bank?” The experts were also asked to review the items generated to measure the extent of customer engagement within the context of the study and to determine the representativeness of items of customer engagement. Based on the outcomes of the experience survey, a total of 53 items were removed from the initial item pool (85 items) as the interviews provided a deeper understanding of customer engagement from a customer’s perspective and each item was thoroughly debated and assessed, resulting in a 32-item customer engagement measure.

Study 1: Item purification

Study 1 involved testing the 32 items among a sample of 231 respondents. The items were incorporated into a structured, self-administered questionnaire, and measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). As a result of quota sampling, the sample was reasonably balanced in terms of race (black 23.8%, coloured 24.7%, Indian 25.5% and white 26.0%), age (Generation X 32%, Generation Y 30.7%, Baby Boomers 36.8%) and gender (male 49.6% and female 50.4%). Furthermore, the majority of the respondents were customers of ABSA (29.1%), followed by FNB (25.7%), Standard Bank (18.7%), Nedbank (16.1%), and Capitec Bank (10.4%). Within the sample, 42.2 per cent of the respondents spoke English as their home language, 75.9 per cent were full-time employed, and the majority (43.7%) had completed matric/grade 12 as their highest level of education, followed by 29.3 per cent who had completed a diploma, and 18.8 per cent who had completed a university degree.

The 32-item scale was subjected to reliability analysis and exploratory factor analysis. According to Churchill (1979, 70), the recommended method to measure the internal consistency of a set of items is to calculate the coefficient alphas. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was, therefore, determined to ensure that the items measuring customer engagement were reliable and the scale had an acceptable Cronbach alpha value of 0.70 or higher (Hair,

Celsi, Ortinau, and Bush 2013, 166). The Cronbach alpha value was 0.97, thereby indicating that the 32-item scale correlated well with the scores.

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to determine whether there were underlying dimensions among the 32 items used to measure customer engagement. The EFA was performed by means of SPSS version 23, using the principal component analysis (as data was normally distributed), and the direct oblimin rotation technique (as factors were likely to correlate with each other). Prior to performing the analysis, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was determined by inspecting the correlation matrix and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value. The correlation matrix revealed the presence of several coefficients of 0.40 and larger, and the KMO value was 0.96, which exceeded the recommended cut-off value of 0.60 (Kaiser, 1970; 1974), and Bartlett's test of sphericity (Bartlett 1954) reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

Based on the results of the reliability test, as well as the results of the EFA, the initial set of items was reduced by eliminating those items with low inter-item correlations as well as those items that cross-loaded or did not load at or above the generally accepted cut-off of 0.40. As indicated in Table 3, the resulting 13 items were analysed, from which only one component emerged, explaining 75.58 per cent of the variance. The items under this component were reviewed to see how they related with existing literature on the concept of customer engagement, after which two additional items (CE14 and CE15) were added to the list in an attempt to have at least 15 items for the next phase of the scale development process (i.e. Study 2).

TABLE 2
15-ITEM CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT SCALE (EFA RESULTS)

Label	Item	Factor loadings
CE1	My bank makes me feel like I belong.	0.82
CE2	The employees at my bank make me feel welcome.	0.77
CE3	I am proud to be a customer of my bank.	0.87
CE4	My bank's employees inspire me.	0.80
CE5	I care about my bank's product and service offerings.	0.82
CE6†	Interacting with my bank is time-consuming.	0.80
CE7	I mostly have positive service interactions with my bank.	0.79
CE8	My bank keeps its promises.	0.88
CE9	My bank is reliable.	0.86
CE10	My bank has integrity (acts fairly, ethically and openly in everything it does).	0.86
CE11	I feel energised when interacting with my bank.	0.87
CE12	I am completely involved when interacting with my bank.	0.87
CE13	I am willing to put effort into interacting with my bank.	0.82
CE14‡	I frequently make use of my bank's products and services.	
CE15‡	I frequently participate in the activities of my bank (such as fundraisers, competitions, etc.)	

† reversed items ‡ added items

Study 2: Reliability and validity assessment

The aim of Study 2 was to further refine (if necessary) and confirm the 15-item scale, and involved testing the scale among a sample of 152 respondents. As a result of quota sampling, the sample was fairly balanced in terms of race (black 25.7%, coloured 22.4%, Indian 25.0% and white 27.0%), age (Generation X 34.9%, Generation Y 37.5%, Baby Boomers 27.6%) and gender (male 49.6% and female 50.4%). Furthermore, the majority of the respondents were customers of ABSA (28.3%), followed by FNB (27.6%), Standard Bank (20.4%), Capitec Bank (13.2%), and Nedbank (10.5%). Within the sample of the second study, the majority of the respondents who took part in the second study spoke English as their home language (47.0%), 65.1 per cent were full-time employed, and the majority (39.2%) had completed matric/grade 12 as their highest level of education, followed by 33.1 percent who had completed a diploma, and 16.9 per cent who had completed a university degree.

The reliability of the 15-item scale was determined by means of Cronbach alpha coefficient, and one low inter-item correlation item (CE6) was removed to refine the scale. A final Cronbach alpha value of 0.96 was attained (well above the 0.70 cut-off value), which indicated that the 14-item scale was reliable.

To determine the validity of the final 14-item customer engagement scale, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS version 24. The results of the CFA indicated that the measurement model fits the data satisfactorily (see Table 3). In addition, as indicated in Table 4, the standardised factor loadings for all 14 items achieved the suggested threshold of 0.60 (Hair et al., 2006), with an AVE of 0.70 (exceeding the 0.60 cut-off value To determine criterion validity, customer engagement was correlated with three marketing-related variables, namely loyalty, trust and satisfaction (included in Study 2).

TABLE 3
MODEL FIT INDICES

	x^2/df	CFI	NFI	RMSEA
Suggested cut-off points	≤ 5.00	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≤ 0.10
Measurement model	2.25	0.95	0.92	0.07 [0.02 3–0.045]

TABLE 4
14-ITEM CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT SCALE (CFA RESULTS)

Label	Item	Factor loadings
CE1	My bank makes me feel like I belong.	0.87
CE2	The employees at my bank make me feel welcome.	0.85
CE3	I am proud to be a customer of my bank.	0.88
CE4	My bank's employees inspire me.	0.89
CE5	I care about my bank's product and service offerings.	0.85
CE7	I mostly have positive service interactions with my bank.	0.89
CE8	My bank keeps its promises.	0.84
CE9	My bank is reliable.	0.85
CE10	My bank has integrity (acts fairly, ethically and openly in everything it does).	0.87
CE11	I feel energised when interacting with my bank.	0.90
CE12	I am completely involved when interacting with my bank.	0.80
CE13	I am willing to put effort into interacting with my bank.	0.83
CE14	I frequently make use of my bank's products and services.	0.73
CE15	I frequently participate in the activities of my bank (such as fund-raisers, competitions, etc.)	0.61

As theorised from the literature review, customer engagement was expected to have a positive relationship with loyalty, trust and satisfaction. The scales used to measure these variables were adopted or adapted from existing measures (indicated in Table 9 in the Appendix). The results, in Table 5, indicated significant and strong positive correlations (at the 0.0001 confidence level) between customer engagement and all three dependent variables, thereby confirming criterion validity.

TABLE 5:
CORRELATION SCORES

	Customer engagement	Loyalty	Trust	Satisfaction
Customer engagement	1.000	0.896	0.882	0.786
Loyalty	0.896	1.000	0.902	0.828
Trust	0.882	0.902	1.000	0.843
Satisfaction	0.786	0.828	0.843	1.000

In conclusion, the nomological validity of the 14-item customer engagement scale was established by examining the relationships between customer engagement, loyalty, trust, and satisfaction by means of structural equation modelling (SEM). Before proceeding to the SEM assessment, a CFA was conducted to ensure adequate fit to the data for the model constructs (i.e. loyalty, trust and satisfaction). The CFA results for the three constructs are summarised in Table 6, indicating that all three constructs were valid and reliable for use in measuring satisfaction, trust and loyalty, respectively, in the South African retail banking industry.

TABLE 6
CFA RESULTS OF NOMOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTS

Construct/ Items	AVE, CR and Factor loadings	
Customer satisfaction	AVE = 0.88	CR = 0.96
I am satisfied with my decision to become a customer of my bank.	0.92	
If I had to do it all over again, I would choose a different bank.	0.87	
My choice to become a customer my bank was a wise one.	0.97	
I think I did the right thing when I decided to become a customer of my bank.	0.83	
Trust	AVE = 0.61	CR = 0.93
My bank treats me in an honest way in every transaction.	0.88	
I feel safe in my transactions with my bank.	0.89	
The services of my bank are trustworthy.	0.87	
The staff at my bank is trustworthy.	0.81	
The services of my bank are reliable.	0.90	
Loyalty	AVE = 0.68	CR = 0.92
I would definitely recommend my bank to someone who seeks my advice.	0.91	
I would encourage relatives and friends to use the services offered by my bank.	0.89	
I intend to use more services offered by my bank in the next few years.	0.83	
I say positive things about my bank to others.	0.87	
I would continue using my bank's services, even if the rates increase somewhat.	0.75	

AVE: Average variance explained
CR: Composite reliability

Following the CFA, a SEM was conducted to test the nomological validity of the 14-item customer engagement scale. The results indicated that the model (Figure 1) provided an acceptable fit to the data, and all standard regression weights were statistically significant. Table 7 summarises the fit indices realised for the nomological model.

FIGURE 1
TEST OF THE NOMOLOGICAL VALIDITY OF THE CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT SCALE

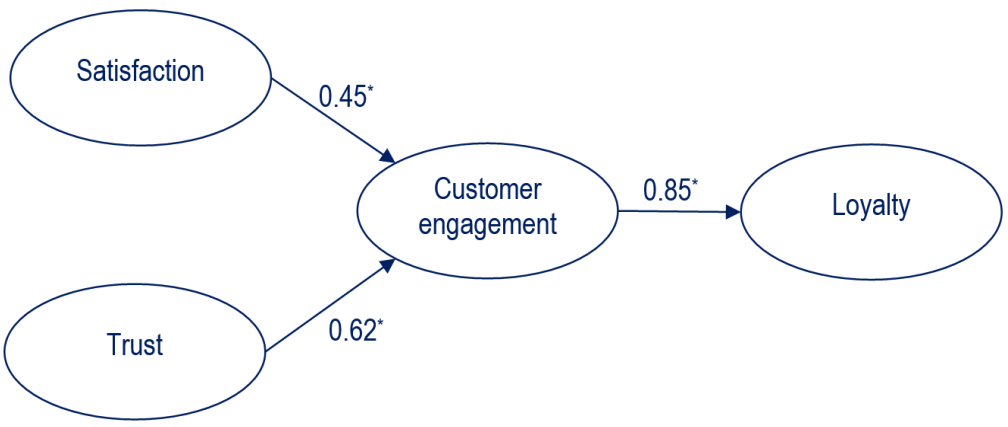

TABLE 7
FIT INDICES FOR THE NOMOLOGICAL MODEL

	x^2/df	CFI	NFI	RMSEA
Suggested cut-off points	≤ 5.00	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≤ 0.10
Structural model	5.066	0.92	0.92	0.035 [0.023–0.045]

DISCUSSION

Based on the extensive literature review, the study contributed to the existing marketing literature. As a result, customer engagement can, therefore, be described as a multidimensional construct that goes beyond awareness, purchase, satisfaction and retention, which leads to the creation of loyalty, and is characterised by a level of cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity that is interactive and co-creative in the relationship with a business, which either the customer or the business instigates and can result in positive word of mouth as well as customer loyalty. This paper considered both the existing literature and its qualitative and quantitative assessments in developing an understanding of the concept of customer engagement. Using Churchill's scale development process, the initial item pool of 85 items was refined by means of experience surveys, and two quantitative studies (with structured surveys). Reliability and validity (EFA and CFA) tests were implemented to statistically refine the items, which subsequently resulted in a valid and reliable 14-item customer engagement scale. The 14-item scale was nomologically tested – in relation with three other marketing constructs – by means of a SEM, which deemed the scale useful to measure customer engagement within the retail banking context. The study, therefore, contributes to the South African banking industry by enabling retail banks to measure the concept of customer engagement and to establish customer loyalty in the retail banking industry. Moreover, the multi-item scale guides retail banks to improve customer engagement so that they might enjoy the benefits of engaged customers and attain a competitive advantage in this changing industry.

Since customer engagement is conducive to the attainment of superior business outcomes (such as positive word-of-mouth and loyalty), it is regarded as the key to establishing and sustaining a competitive advantage. It is, therefore, critical that businesses can successfully manage customer engagement as part of their marketing processes. South African retail banks can subsequently implement this 14-item scale (presented in Table 3) to measure and improve customer engagement to enjoy the benefits of these engaged customers.

Lastly, the multi-item scale aids marketing scholars who want to continue to build on this scale in order to improve the awareness of the extent of customer engagement.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

In this study, customer engagement was described as an interactive and participative relationship between the customer and business, which signifies a continuous interaction between the parties involved. Subsequently, this merits a longitudinal investigation into the concept of customer engagement, as compared to this study's cross-sectional nature.

Because of the lack of a suitable sampling frame, this study utilised non-probability sampling, which implies that the sample may not be representative of the study's target population. Furthermore, even though the Johannesburg metropolitan area (from which the samples were drawn) represents the economic hub of South Africa (Official website of the city of Johannesburg, 2013), it is not an accurate reflection of the entire South African population. Correspondingly, this research could also be repeated in other provinces of South Africa, and the results could then be compared to determine whether customer engagement differs in different provinces.

Finally, the scale to measure customer engagement was developed specifically for South African retail banks. It would be interesting, however, to determine whether the scale could also be used in other service industries in South Africa. Therefore, the scale could be adapted for future research and tested in different service sectors.

CONCLUSION

This study implemented Churchill's (1979) scale development process and subsequently developed a reliable and valid 14-item scale that measures customer engagement in the South African retail banking industry. This customer engagement scale could guide retail banks to improve their customer engagement so that they might enjoy the benefits of engaged customers and gain a competitive advantage in this changing industry. Future researchers could attempt to involve retail banks in future studies in order to attain a sampling frame for probability sampling, and subsequently, test the customer engagement scale under a representative sample. In addition, the usability of this customer engagement scale – which was specifically developed for South African retail banks – could be tested among other service sectors, to establish a generalised customer service engagement measure potentially.

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APPENDIX

TABLE 8:
NOMOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTS – SOURCES AND DESCRIPTIVES

Construct/ Items	Source	Mean	SD
Customer satisfaction	Oliver (1997)		
I am satisfied with my decision to become a customer of my bank.		5.67	1.54
If I had to do it all over again, I would choose a different bank.		2.83	1.14
My choice to become a customer of my bank was a wise one.		5.60	1.56
I think I did the right thing when I decided to become a customer of my bank.		5.62	1.52
Trust	Lee and Moghavvemi		
My bank treats me in an honest way in every transaction.	(2015);	5.40	1.60
I feel safe in my transactions with my bank.	Zeyad et al. (2015)	5.49	1.52
The services of my bank are trustworthy.		5.60	1.55
The staff at my bank is trustworthy.		5.47	1.51
The services of my bank are reliable.		5.64	1.34
Loyalty	Dimitriades (2006)		
I would definitely recommend my bank to someone who seeks my advice.		5.53	1.59
I would encourage relatives and friends to use the services offered by my bank.		5.34	1.74
I intend to use more services offered by my bank in the next few years.		5.24	1.67
I say positive things about my bank to others.		5.42	1.63
I would continue using my bank's services, even if the rates increase somewhat.		4.90	1.63

n = 152

All items were measured on 7-point Likert scales (where 1 = Strongly disagree, and 7 = Strongly agree).

Internal marketing variables as correlate of fostering employees' satisfaction and productivity in commercial banks in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the relationship between internal marketing and employee job satisfaction and productivity within commercial banks in Lagos, Nigeria with the aim of improving the quality of internal marketing in this sector. A correlational research design and a quantitative approach were employed. Data was gathered by means of a self-administered questionnaire. The respondents comprised 348 randomly selected male and female banking employees at branches of three commercial banks in Lagos. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed a significant relationship between internal marketing and employee job satisfaction and productivity. Furthermore, the quality of internal marketing boosted employees' awareness of customer needs as well as sales. Based on these findings, it is recommended that commercial banks embrace internal marketing programmes targeted at staff in order to enhance employee satisfaction and productivity.

Keywords: External Customers, Internal Customers, Internal Marketing, Satisfaction, Productivity

INTRODUCTION

The concept of employees as internal customers as a strategy to improve productivity has become a topical issue in Nigeria, especially among banking executives and managers. Internal marketing aims to attract, retain and reward employees and to promote long-term employment, which in turn increases employee job satisfaction and productivity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review focuses on four key themes, namely, internal marketing; employee job satisfaction; internal marketing and employee job satisfaction; and internal marketing and employee productivity.

Internal Marketing

Papasolomou, Kitchen and Christofi (2017:5) define internal marketing as an ad hoc quest to influence and change employee attitudes and behaviour in order to inculcate a concerted sales mentality. Employees are a company's original market as they provide feedback on its products and services. Thus, the primary objective of internal marketing is to ensure that staff are motivated and conscious of customers' needs. Larki, Beighi, Tajarrod and Beigi (2016:207) state that internal marketing involves making internal products (jobs) available to satisfy the needs of the internal market (employees) in order to achieve organisational objectives. Larki et al. (2016:207) add that a firm must hire,

train and motivate employees to serve external customers as this goes a long way in fulfilling internal customers' (employees) needs.

Imankhan and Charakdar (2018:2346) distinguish between implementation of internal marketing at the strategic and tactical level. At the strategic level, it aims to foster an internal environment that enhances customer consciousness and sales mindedness. The key facilitators at this level are management strategies, personnel policies, internal training and planning.

Sarker and Ashrafi (2018:122) note that successful internal marketing requires that clear objectives be set and that the concept be properly explained to staff so that they feel that they are an integral part of the company. Employees not only have a duty to understand the company's vision and strategic objectives, but they also need to understand how such objectives can be achieved. The societal aspects of internal marketing include managers ensuring that the work environment is a safe and caring one characterised by psychological support, assistance, friendliness, and mutual trust and respect (Lings, 2004:405). This is not to suggest that employees' every whim is catered for, but that supervisors recognise employees as individuals that should be treated with dignity and respect (Lings, 2004:405).

Many organisations and researchers have acknowledged that internal marketing is an important tool to increase employee job satisfaction and productivity (Conduit, Matanda & Mavondo, 2014:67; Chen & Lee, 2015:45). Conceptually, internal marketing involves applying traditional marketing concepts amongst employees in order to enhance corporate effectiveness (Ramos, 2018:39). Beige, Jorfi, and Tajarrod (2016:375) define internal marketing as a strategy to overcome resistance to change and to motivate employees to perform their duties to the best of their abilities. In the context of this study, it is a marketing strategy that aims to inculcate corporate values among employees in order to ensure that both the bank's and employees' goals are achieved.

The long-term objective of internal marketing is to retain and reward productive employees by offering incentives that promote long-term commitment to the organisation and, in turn, enhance employee satisfaction and productivity (Shah, 2014:33). Sarker and Ashrafi (2018:122) observe that internal marketing aims to achieve sustainable organisational development and enhance performance in a competitive market, as satisfied internal customers make for fulfilled external customers. It is against this background that commercial banks in Nigeria have sought to improve their performance by adopting appropriate internal marketing tools to increase employee satisfaction and productivity.

Employee Job Satisfaction

Employee job satisfaction describes a form of psychological attachment to the organisation that arises from employees' perception that they benefit from being employed by the organisation (Bailey, Albassami, & Al-Meshal, 2016:821). This includes awareness of the costs of leaving the organisation. Job satisfaction may also encompass empowerment and fulfilment on the job (Mainardes, Rodrigues & Teixeira, 2019: 134). Empowerment strategies include training and development to improve service delivery to external customers. Such training focuses on the specific tasks employees are expected to carry out and information pertaining to customers' needs as well as the incentives offered for effective customer service (Ferduis & Polonsky, 2014:312).

Internal Marketing and Employee Job Satisfaction

Mainardes et al. (2019:134) note that internal marketing focuses on the relationship between financial rewards, psychological rewards and job satisfaction. The association between job satisfaction, engagement and productivity is hinged on three dimensions, namely, (i) a strong desire to remain a member of the organisation; (ii) a commitment to high levels of effort; and (iii) firm belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals. Sousa, Krot and Rodrigues (2018:55) argue that employee satisfaction and productivity are based on behaviour that reflects employees' loyalty and on-going commitment to the organisation's success.

Similarly, Bailey, Albassami and Al-Meshal (2016:821) state that employee job satisfaction is a form of psychological attachment to the organisation that arises from the employee's perceptions of what he/she will lose if he/she leaves the organisation. The main reason for staying is to continue to benefit from the advantages resulting

from his/her relationship with the organisation. Internal marketing thus involves an organisation's efforts to improve its attractiveness as a potential employer so that it can attract and retain employees that will deliver excellent customer service (Shabbir & Salaria, 2014:239).

Internal Marketing and Employee Productivity

Papasolomou et al. (2017:5) describe internal marketing as treating employees as internal customers in order to boost productivity and thus achieve organisational goals. Satisfying the needs of internal customers enables the organisation to satisfy external customers. Satisfied employees are more loyal and motivated and more inclined to remain with the employer (Chinweoke, Anetor, Adegboye & Chukwudinma, 2016: 69; Alhakimi & Alhariri, 2014:15).

Haghighikhah, Khadang and Arabi (2016: 147) note that internal marketing boosts employee productivity, enabling commercial banks to achieve their objectives. On the other hand, job satisfaction involves compatible and incompatible feelings that employees have in relation to their jobs. The services offered by commercial banks place employees as vital cogs in the value generation process. It is generally accepted that customer satisfaction depends more on the process of service delivery than its outcome.

It is important to note that internal marketing calls for investment in employees as internal customers, which will benefit the bank in the long term. However, it would appear that bank executives and managers tend to adopt a more short-term perspective and thus do not invest sufficiently in such initiatives.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the research design, target population, sample size, procedure for data collection, research instrument, validity and reliability, ethical considerations and data analysis employed in the study.

Research Design

A correlational research design was considered appropriate for this study as it sought to elicit information from employees of commercial banks in order to determine the relationship between internal marketing and employee satisfaction and productivity. According to Singh and Upadhya 2008:67), the correlational research design is concerned with the extent of the relationship between two or more variables for the purpose of drawing generalisations.

Target Population and Sample

The target population was 3,526 staff employed by three purposively selected commercial banks in Lagos, Nigeria that have incorporated internal marketing in their day-to-day operations. The banks were selected using systematic random sampling. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table and comprised 348 male and female employees from the selected commercial banks. The sample was further broken down using stratified random sampling to take into account the respondents' gender, department and level of education. This was done to balance gender differences and to ensure gender equity.

Research Instrument

A self-administered questionnaire designated: 'Internal Market Job Satisfaction and Productivity Questionnaire (IMJSPQ)', was used to collect information from the respondents on the relationship between internal marketing and employee job satisfaction and productivity. It contained 30 items divided into three sections and rated on a Five-point Likert-scale. Closed-ended questions were posed for easy collection and analysis of data.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity of the instrument was achieved by submitting items to subject experts in Management Science

as well as the banking industry for vetting and approval. Thereafter, a pilot study was conducted with 30 bank employees to establish the reliability of the instrument. The Cronbach Alpha was used to test reliability and the internal consistency of the instrument. The Cronbach Alpha scores for the study are depicted in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1
RELIABILITY COEFFICIENT OF
INTERNAL MARKET JOB SATISFACTION AND PRODUCTIVITY QUESTIONNAIRE (IMJSPQ)

Instrument (IMJSPQ)	Mean	SD	Item	Factor Loading	Item Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Internal Marketing	3.91	.777	10	.769	.681	.834
Employee Job Satisfaction	3.87	.846	10	.730	.607	.862
Employee Productivity	3.89	.833	10	.672	.624	.891

Table 1 shows that, the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient value for internal marketing was 83.4%; 86.2% for job satisfaction; and 89.1% for productivity. According to DeVellies (2011:112) a Cronbach Alpha score below 0.60-0.65 is undesirable, 0.65-0.70 is minimally acceptable, 0.70-0.80 is very good, and above 0.90 is excellent. The study yielded very good internal reliability as the Cronbach Alpha scores were all above 80%.

Data Collection

William (2011:97) notes that questionnaires are a useful and common instrument to gather quantitative data. A total of 348 questionnaires were administered. A total of 330 completed questionnaires were returned, completed by the respondents, indicating an excellent response rate of 95%.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Research Ethics Committee to carry out the research. Gatekeeper's permission was also obtained from the Human Resource (HR) department of the selected banks and bank regulatory bodies before proceeding with data collection. The study adhered to the generally accepted ethical principles for social science research (Dingwall, Iphofen, Lewis, Oates & Emmerich 2017:111). The respondents were asked to sign an informed consent letter before the questionnaire was administered and were informed that they were free to withdraw at any point during the administration of the questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured at all times throughout the study.

Limitations of the study

Due to time and budgetary constraints, the study was limited to three major commercial banks in Nigeria; hence, the findings cannot be generalised to the entire banking industry in the country. Future studies could cover all banks in Nigeria.

RESULTS

The data were analysed using the mean scores, standard deviation and the Pearson product moment correlation statistical tool. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.50 level of significance.

This section presents the descriptive and inferential statistics. The discussion begins with the analysis and discussion of the descriptive statistics.

Table 2 shows that an equal number of male and female employees participated in the study. The majority (57.3%) of the respondents held a first (Bachelor's) degree, followed by 24.6% with Master's degrees, and 18.1% with a

Higher National Diploma (HND). The majority (65.5%) of the respondents were married, while 18.8% were single and 7% were separated. The remaining respondents (5.4% and 3.3%) were divorced or widowed, respectively.

In terms of experience, 40.9% of the respondents had worked in the banking sector for 10 to 14 years, 36.4% for five to nine years and 11.8% for less than five years. Finally, 10.9% of the respondents had 15 or more years' service in the banking sector.

The majority (77.3%) of the respondents had held their current position in the bank for five to 10 years, while 11.8% and 10.9% had occupied their current position for less than five years and 11 years and more, respectively.

In terms of department, 39.2% of the respondents were placed in the marketing department, 25.3% in the operations department and 12.1% in corporate services. The remainder (8.4%, 8.1% and 6.9%) worked in the funds transfer department, human resources department and recovery department, respectively.

The Shapiro-Wilk test of Normality was conducted on the primary data and the results are presented in Table 3 and Figure 1.

Table 3 indicates no violation of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity, as there was a strong, positive correlation between the variables. This was further supported by the normal P-P plot of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the variables as illustrated in Figure 1:

TABLE 2
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	165	50.0
	Female	165	50.0
	Total	330	100
Educational Qualification	HND	81	24.6
	First Degree	189	57.3
	Master's Degree	60	18.1
	Total	330	100
Marital Status	Married	216	65.5
	Separated	23	7.0
	Single	62	18.8
	Widowed	11	3.3
	Divorced	18	5.4
	Total	330	100
Working Experience	5 years and below	39	11.8
	Between 5 and 9 years	120	36.4
	Between 10 and 14 years	135	40.9
	15 years and above	36	10.9
	Total	330	100
Years in Current Position	Below 5 years	39	11.8
	5 – 10 years	255	77.3
	11 years and above	36	10.9
	Total	330	100
Department	Marketing	128	39.2
	Operations	84	25.3
	Corporate Services	40	12.1
	Fund Transfer	28	8.4
	Human Resources	27	8.1
	Recovery	23	6.9
	Total	330	100

FIGURE 1
BIPLOT FOR A CASUAL BLOUSE/TOP

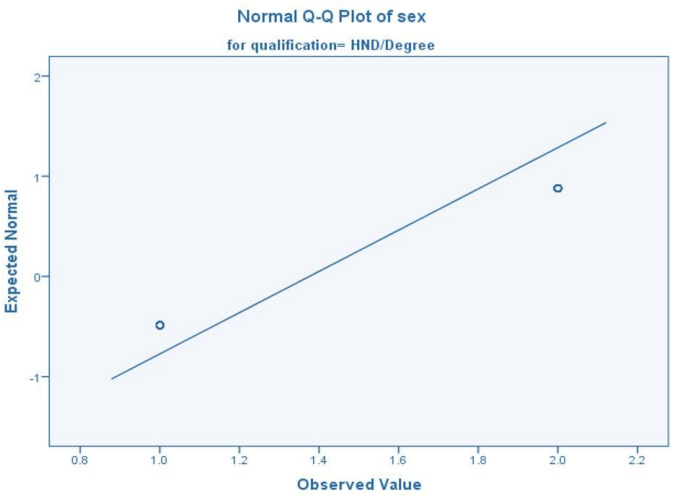

TABLE 3
TEST OF NORMALITY OF PRIMARY DATA

Tests of Normality[b,c,d]

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Educational qualification	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df.	Sig.
Sex	HND/Degree	.705	330	.000	.914	330	.000

Figure 1 illustrates that the Pearson Product Moment Correlation between the independent variables and dependent variable is normal. This shows the extent of normality of the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

The formulated research hypotheses are tested below.

Internal Marketing and Employee Job Satisfaction

The first research hypothesis was formulated to examine the relationship between internal marketing and job satisfaction among employees of the participating commercial banks in Nigeria. The results of the statistical analysis for hypothesis one are presented in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNAL MARKETING AND EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION

Variables	N	Mean Scores	SD	MD	r_{cal}	P	Remark
Internal marketing	330	27.02	3.65	0.08	0.59*	<0.05	Significant
Employee satisfaction	330	26.94	4.21				

**Significant; df = 328, critical r= .113*

Table 4 shows that the calculated r – value of 0.59 is significant since it is greater than the critical r – value of 0.113 given 328 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the research hypothesis is accepted. This means that internal marketing significantly relates to employee job satisfaction in the banking industry.

Internal Marketing and Employee Productivity

The second research hypothesis was formulated to examine the relationship between internal marketing and employee productivity in the participating commercial banks in Nigeria. The results of the statistical analysis for hypothesis two are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNAL MARKETING AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY

Variables	N	Mean Scores	SD	MD	r_{cal}	P	Remark
Internal marketing	330	27.02	3.65	1.16	0.64*	<0.05	Significant
Employee productivity	330	25.86	4.10				

**Significant; df = 328, critical r= .113*

Table 5 shows that the calculated r – value of 0.64 is significant since it is greater than the critical r – value of 0.113 given 328 degree of freedom at 0.05 level significance. Consequently, the research hypothesis is accepted. This means that internal marketing significantly relates to employee productivity in the participating commercial banks in Nigeria. Judging from the correlation coefficient and the level of significance, it is evident that there is a strong positive relationship between internal marketing and employee productivity in these commercial banks.

DISCUSSION

The study aimed to determine the relationship between internal marketing and employee job satisfaction and productivity in commercial banks in the Lagos metropolis, Nigeria. The findings reveal that internal marketing has a significant relationship with both employee job satisfaction and productivity. These findings are supported by Amoopour, Hemmatpour and Mirtaslimi (2014:123); Shabbir and Salaria, (2014:239) and Shah (2014:15). Amoopour et al. (2014:123) concluded that employee satisfaction leads to customer satisfaction. Shabbir and Salaria (2014:239) and Haghighikhah et al. (2016:147) noted that satisfied employees (internal customers) lead to satisfied (external) customers. Happy employees\ are motivated to be productive and the key driver of organisational performance is employee attributes such as employee satisfaction. Service employees who are satisfied and loyal to their organisations are more likely to be committed to delivering high quality services to customers.

Commercial banks in Lagos are lagging behind in developing and implementing effective internal marketing strategies that could improve employee satisfaction and productivity. As Shah (2014:15) notes, improved product quality will lead to satisfied customers, customer retention and will attract new customers. Ultimately, this will enhance revenue growth and profitability. Thus, a powerful internal marketing strategy triggers a positive chain reaction. Building such a strategy requires substantial investment in time and resources.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMERCIAL BANKS

Based on the results and the discussion on the findings, management of commercial banks in Nigeria should make funds available to develop marketing programmes that focus on the internal market (employees) as well as the external market (customers). Employees are often sidelined as banks spend thousands of dollars attracting and retaining customers. The study's findings point to the need for a shift in mindset to develop strategies to increase employee satisfaction by designing jobs with features that appeal to employees, rather than merely concentrating on the task requirements of their jobs.

Banking staff provide clients with important services and thus need to be aware of their customers' needs. On-going training is required in the latest technology and innovations that have revolutionised banking services. Bank management should also support their staff in acquiring crucial communication and recovery skills. At all times, they should strive to create an environment where employees feel comfortable and satisfied with their job. If employees feel valued as people, and are cared for and supported by their organisation, levels of customer satisfaction will increase as loyal, committed employees are likely to deliver high quality services.

It is thus recommended that management of commercial banks should prioritise internal marketing in order to enhance job satisfaction and productivity.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to examine if internal marketing variables correlate to fostering of banking employees' job satisfaction and productivity. The results clearly indicated a significant relationship between internal marketing and banking employees' job satisfaction. The results also indicated the existence of a strong positive relationship between internal marketing and employee's job productivity. If banks' management properly manage the banks' internal marketing, this would create an internal job environment within the bank that bolters customer consciousness and sales mindedness among their employees. The key facilitators that would serve as a catalyst to empower staff to be motivated would be if they support the management methods or approaches, personnel policy, internal training and planning procedures within the bank, thus resulting in optimal employee productivity levels.

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The effects of hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations on online purchasing intentions: A Turkish case study

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ABSTRACT

This paper was structured to examine the effects of shopping motivations that are classified as hedonic and utilitarian on the online buying intentions of consumers. In this context, one of the three aims of the study was to reveal traditional shopping motivations for online shopping, and the second aim was to test whether traditional shopping motivations are also valid for online shopping, whereas the last aim was to examine the effects of traditional shopping motivations on purchasing intention. The population of the study was consumers who are shopping online and older than 18 years. The sample was chosen via the convenience sampling method among consumers, and accordingly, 460 participants were included examined. The survey method was used as a data-gathering technique, and the data were analyzed with the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) methods. The findings showed that the motivations of traditional shopping are also valid for online shopping and have an effect on purchasing intentions. Primarily, it was found that the relative effect of utilitarian motivation is high.

Keywords: Hedonic Shopping Motivations, Utilitarian Shopping Motivations, Online Purchase Intention, Online Shopping

INTRODUCTION

Since the first day technology entered our lives, many of our habits have experienced a change process. One of these changes is online shopping. The environment of online shopping has become the main and strongest opponent of the conventional understanding of shopping with its characteristics (interactivity, universality, low cost, geographical limitlessness, infinite capacity, flexible time, etc.), and consumers have started to meet their wants and needs in this way (Akar, 2008). One of the reasons why online shopping has grown so much through the years is related to the shopping experience provided by firms for their customers. To increase this experience, firms constantly add new features and services for consumers who shop online with the purpose of providing them with the support, ease and comfort they have while they are shopping face to face (Mohsin, 2020). These include finding online retailers, searching for product information, selecting payment options, purchasing products or services, achieving time and money savings and communicating with other consumers and retailers (Lin, 2007; Cai and Cude, 2008). At the same time, online shopping presents the comfort of finding several options without being dependent on time and location by providing the opportunity of rich information and comparison regarding goods and services (Saydan, 2008).

It was determined that without regard to where consumers end up shopping (online/offline), 63% of the journey of shopping starts online (www.thinkwithgoogle, 2018). That is, researchers investigated where consumers made a

search by ignoring where they complete their shopping. Google and Amazon are prominent among places where consumers mostly conduct searches.

Findings on online shopping show that approximately 1.8 billion individuals worldwide purchased goods online in 2018 Additionally, while the global e-retail sales in 2018 were 2.8 trillion dollars, estimations indicate that this value will reach up to 4.8 trillion until 2021 (Statista, 2019, 2020).

According to the Household Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Usage Survey (2019) by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), the rate of online shopping in Turkey is 34.1%. This rate was 29.3% in the same period of the previous year (2018). Products purchased by online shopping included foot items or daily necessities by 27.4%, furniture (except consumer electronics) by 26.9%, electronics by 20.3% and books, magazines, newspapers (including e-books) by 20.2% (TUIK, 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic which started at the end of 2019 has led to the largest changes in shopping behaviors. As countries all around the world have applied strict precautions to limit the spread of the virus, this has led to panic buying at individual locations such as supermarkets and pharmacies and e-commerce stores. This is why the number of consumers who shop online regarding especially basic need products such as food and cleaning and medical products has increased fast (Mohsin, 2020). "According to a recent study conducted by Adobe, it was revealed that the sales of products such as hand sanitizers, gloves and facemasks increased by more than 800% in the first ten weeks of the year due to COVID-19. The sales of personal hygiene products and over-the-counter drugs sold for flu/cold and painkillers increased respectively by 231% and 217%. As gyms were closed down, and outside activity was severely restricted, the demand for fitness equipment increased by 55% just in the first two weeks of March" (Mohsin, 2020, Statisca, 2020).

Considering the significant increase in online shopping throughout the years, it is a necessity for firm managers to understand the reasons for consumers to prefer online shopping. This will provide benefits especially for firms providing online shopping opportunities to understand the magnitude of the competition in the market and determine their position in the market. This is why it is important to determine the motivations underlying the online shopping preferences of consumers in making managerial decisions (Rohm and Swaminathan, 2004).

When the growth in online retailing is considered, determining motivations unique to this channel of shopping will be guiding for managers also in terms of defining different consumer segments. This will allow the managers of firms providing an experience of online shopping to effectively adapt their offers to utilitarian and hedonic consumer types and provide a basis for consumers to perform purchasing behaviors.

Utilitarian motivation involves the cognitive aspects of attitude such as economy (Zeithaml, 1988), ease and time savings (Jarvenpaa and Todd, 1996; Teo, 2001). As it refers to non-routine experiences where people rather shop for entertainment which allow them to "escape everything" while shopping, hedonic motivation usually involves the affective aspects of attitude (Kim, 2002; Mathwick, Malhotra and Rigdon, 2001).

Considering that individuals with utilitarian motivation have a tendency to seek diversity in their shopping, it is seen that their online shopping intentions would be positive due to the easiness of the internet and a shopping experience providing alternatives based on various features, as well as provision of characteristics such as savings from location and prices. On the other hand, as individuals with hedonic motivation focus on the entertainment, escape, social and adventure aspects of shopping, due to the characteristics such as pleasure and satisfaction they will obtain from shopping, it was revealed that their online shopping intentions are positively affected (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; To, Liao and Lin, 2007; Topaloğlu, 2012). For this reason, knowing about with which types of motivation consumers shop will provide benefits for increasing the effectiveness of marketing efforts to be offered in direction of a large part of customer segments such as offline (conventional) shoppers towards online shopping by marketing managers and increasing these individuals' intentions of purchasing.

In reality, many consumers who shop online do not conclude their experience by purchasing. One of the fundamental reasons for this is the failure of online retailers in finding a way to create value for consumers that visit their websites (Overby and Lee, 2006). Online retailers' understanding of the main values sought by e-customers is dependent on determining the factors that motivate them for shopping. Therefore, considering the issue in terms of managers and

marketing practitioners, determination of hedonic and utilitarian motivations that motivate consumers towards online shopping appears as a potential power in shaping the purchasing intentions and behaviors of consumers. Moreover, determining whether consumers who shop online obtain more of a utilitarian or hedonic value will be guiding in terms of understanding the functions provided by online shopping for consumers and determining which marketing mix components should be paid more importance to by management.

Retailers that provide the opportunity of online shopping naturally prefer to attract as many customers as possible towards their websites. In addition to providing a good online shopping experience for their potential customers, they may also want to offer entertaining activities that encourage their existing customers to shop again. Furthermore, while providing the highest amount of information possible in online shopping, optimizing hierarchical levels as much as possible during shopping may be seen as a factor that increases the online purchasing intentions of consumers. Thus, consideration of shopping motivations by managers and implementers is important for the online shopping process to be satisfactory (Bridges and Florsheim, 2008).

This study provides a construct for motivations that Turkish consumers may have in terms of online shopping. For this reason, this study also provides valuable information for businesses and marketers that aim to discover the market developing in Turkey and pay importance to online shopping. Based on these motivations, marketing managers may understand what the expectations of consumers from online shopping are, gain consumers' trust by offering them a purpose- and entertainment-oriented online shopping experience and comprehend the purchasing intentions and behaviors of potential visitors. Additionally, the results obtained in this study may also be useful for offline (conventional) retailers who would like to offer their goods and services online. In this context, the results of this study may provide benefits for retail and marketing managers in their decisions towards the future based on online shopping.

It is important for managers and marketing practitioners who want to increase the online purchasing tendencies of consumers to pay attention to whether they should focus on motivating the utilitarian or hedonic urges of consumers in their messages towards consumers, product and brand diversity they will offer, campaigns and prices, for their success. Moreover, determining which campaigns and sales development activities to be developed by managers will motivate what type of value perceptions of consumers will be the main factor increasing their online purchasing tendencies.

Finally, the advantageous features of the internet motivate e-commerce marketers towards attracting their customers to their websites and selling various goods and services worldwide (Kuhlmeier & Knight, 2005). Hence, as the internet has become an important tool for the internationalization of firms, factors such as hedonism and utilitarianism that motivate online shopping are effective on the success of internet-based international marketing.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Although there are some noticeable differences between online shopping behavior and conventional shopping behavior, it is seen that there are similarities between shopping motivations. This is why hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations are also valid in online shopping.

In this context, utilitarian and hedonic motivations in both conventional shopping (Ertekin, 2014; Irani and Hanzaee, 2011; Arnold and Reynolds, 2012; Dholakia, 1999; Olsen and Skallerud, 2011; Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982) and online shopping (Ahmed, 2015; Childers, Carr, Peck and Carson, 2001; Van Slyke, Comunale and Belanger, 2002; Kim, 2006; To et al.,2007; Bridges and Florsheim, 2008; Chiu, Wang, Fang and Huang 2014; Davis, Lang and Diego, 2014; Martínez-López, Pla-García, Gázquez-Abad and Rodríguez-Ardura, 2014; Chang and Chen, 2015) are concepts that have been examined for a long time to understand why people shop.

Studies on motivations in online shopping from approximately 20 years ago (To et al., 2007; Ghosh, 1998; Keeney, 1999; Morganosky and Cude, 2000; Verhoef and Langerak, 2001) rather emphasized utilitarian motivations and argued that these motivations are the primary factor of purchasing intentions. However, today, the changed consumer profiles and preferences prioritize pleasure elements in online shopping. Recent studies on online shopping motivations in the context of purchasing intentions (Chiu et al., 2014; Davis et al., 2014; Martínez-López et al., 2014; Chang and

Chen, 2015) are highly limited. In the rapidly changing conditions of today, online shopping is increasingly gaining significance, and knowing about consumer motivations on this platform becomes even more critical for firms.

In this sense, this study has two objectives. The first aim is to test online motivation factors via confirmatory factor analysis to reveal validity and reliability findings. At this stage, the aim is to evaluate scales that have been developed to measure online traditional shopping motivations in previously published papers. The second aim of this paper is to determine the effects of online motivation factors on online purchasing intentions. This aim will be accomplished by utilizing Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The foundation of purchasing behavior models consists of the effects of motivations expressed as a part of the attitude component by the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Pearce and Coughlan, 2012). There are many studies on consumer motivations and purchasing behaviors including those by Howard and Sheth (1969), Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and Ajzen (1991). Studies on consumers' online shopping behaviors (George, 2004; Limayem, Khalifa and Frini, 2000; Hansen, 2008) and online travel shopping behaviors (Lee, Qu and Kim, 2007) and mobile conversation services (Nysveen, Pedersen and Thorbjornsen, 2005) are related to the preliminary studies of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) on TRA and Ajzen (1991) on TPB. These models (TRA and TPB) proposed that attitudes towards subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and behavior will affect purchasing intent, and purchasing intent will affect purchasing behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen, 1991).

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) refers to two significant studies which empirically tested two theories that may set a foundation to explain the behaviors of consumers regarding internet shopping based on TPB (Taylor and Todd, 1995). In such studies, it has been aimed to determine and empirically test the technological, social and psychological factors that determine the intention and behavior of consumers for shopping on the internet by using an elaborated version of TAM.

TAM is a theory based on TRA that was developed by Davis (1989) to especially determine the factors that affect the intentions of individuals to shop on the internet. TRA, on the other hand, is a sociopsychology-based behavioral theory that was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). TRA argues that social behaviors are dependent on the attitudes of individuals, and the behavior of using or not using information technologies is affected by the behavior of the individual. TRA is the most frequently used theoretical framework which was developed with the purpose of explaining the behaviors of individuals that are intentional and deliberate (Olson and Zanna, 1993). Ajzen (1991) revealed the TPB model by elaborating on TRA and argued that individual behavior does not only take place by the will of the individual, but some other factors are also effective in shaping the individual behavior.

TAM suggests that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use determine the individual's behavioral intention. In the Extended Technology Acceptance Model (E-TAM), in addition to the variable of Perceived Ease of Use, it is argued that the Compatibility variable affects Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use. It states that these variables affect the attitude of the person, and the attitude of the person affects their behavioral intention. Finally, it suggests that this variable triggers the actual usage activity. It has also been discussed in the literature that the perceived usefulness idea of the individual is effective in the formation of behavioral intention (Lin, 2007).

TAM is a model that was developed to explain and estimate the acceptance of information technologies at the workplace (Davis, 1989). Studies such as those by Yang and Jolly (2008), Nysveen et al. (2005), Bruner II and Kumar (2005), Dabholkar and Bagozzi (2002) and Vankatesh and Davis (2000) performed the implementation of the model for services, technological products and other innovations from different fields and adopted the model outside the workplace, that is, daily life.

Bruner II and Kumar (2005) defended the idea that adaptation of TAM for the consumer sector could be only possible by including both hedonic and cognitive elements. From there, the Consumer Technology Acceptance Model was developed. The main difference of the Consumer Technology Acceptance Model is the hedonic aspect (Childers et al., 2001; Dabholkar and Bagozzi, 2002). The emotional statuses of consumers were also included in the model in studies on this model. In the study by Childers et al. (2001) on online shopping, the existence of both emotional

and cognitive motivations was discussed, and "entertainment" was included among the most important determinants in shopping. In this context, in the study by Childers et al. (2001) which examined online shopping behaviors on the basis of hedonic and utilitarian motivations, the authors took TAM as the basis. As this study also discusses utilitarian motivations emphasizing the cognitive aspect of attitudes and hedonic motivations emphasizing the affective aspect of attitudes, TAM was accepted as the theoretical framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

Consumer Motivations in Shopping

Hirschman (1984) points out two situations related to the basic structure of shopping: "reflection" and "sensation." In this context, shopping might be regarded as a process that provides cognitive (reflection) and active (sensation) experiences for individuals. Cognitive shopping involves basic physiological needs that fulfill utilitarian functions and tangible benefits that satisfy intentional purchase performance, while useful (sensational) shopping involves intangible benefits related to the hedonic and utilitarian aspects of experiences.

The term "motivation" may be described as intrinsic motivators that direct consumers to a specific behavior, and motivations are accepted as the priority of buying behavior (Mahato, 1989). Consumers look for two types of benefit during buying behaviors. The first benefit is hedonic factors that motivate buying behavior, and the second benefit is utilitarian shopping motivations.

According to Campbell (2002), rationality involves an attempt to satisfy needs arising from shortness, while hedonism is a search for joy or pleasure. According to Hu and Jasper (2004), rational shopping involves a range of conscious searches and efforts for a planned and purposeful end, while hedonic shopping is somewhat related to personal and emotional reactions. In this context, studies in the literature (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Batra and Ahtola, 1990; Babin et al., 1994; Babin and Attaway, 2000; Wang, Gomez-Insausti, Biasiotto, Barbiero and Mcnall, 2000; Kim, 2001; Haanpää, 2005; Jiang and Wang, 2006; Fiore and Kim, 2007; Michon, Yu, Smith and Chebat, 2007) often emphasize that emotional aspects provide a better understanding of experiential features, and this shopping emotion might be the basis of purchasing behavior.

Zaichkowsky (1985) agrees with Hirschman and Holbrook's (1982) views, suggesting that consumers today are more interested in consumption and purchase processes than before as their purchase motivation is based on pleasure in addition to utility. Therefore, the shopping and purchase process today involves both utilitarian (rational) and hedonic motivations.

The shopping motivations of consumers had long been dealt with by utilizing a rational and information processing approach. However, several researchers began to question the information processing approach in the late 1970s and explored some shopping concepts that had previously gone unnoticed. Since then, many studies (Tauber, 1972; Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Dawson, Bloch and Ridgway 1990; Babin et al., 1994; Jarrat, 1996; Swinyard, 1998; Wakefield and Baker, 1998; Babin and Attaway, 2000; Gilly and Wolfinbarger, 2000; Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000; Mathwick et al,2001; Moye and Kincade, 2002; İbrahim and Wee, 2002; Nicholls, Kranendonk, Li and Roslow, 2002; Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Novak, Hoffman and Duhachek, 2003; Parsons, 2003; Khan, Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2004; Haanpaa, 2005; Rintamaki, Kanto, Kuusela and Spence, 2006; Millan and Howard, 2007; Chen, Lee, Tsai and Lin, 2008; Bridges and Florsheim, 2008; Ozen and Kodaz, 2012; Topaloğlu, 2012; Martínez-López et al.,2014; Ahmed, 2015; Chakraborty and Soodan, 2019; Varadaraj and Charumathi, 2019) have revealed that consumer motivation in shopping has both utilitarian (rational) and hedonic aspects which influence consumers to certain extents as a situation which has almost gained a de facto quality in the literature.

Factors that motivate consumers to be hedonic and utilitarian in shopping have been a topic of some studies (Kim, 2006; Overby and Lee, 2006; To et al., 2007; O'Brein, 2010). Consumers not only respond to external stimuli but also create many images related to the product in their minds. Therefore, they take part in a shopping process that provides them with emotional pleasure and joy. Therefore, views based on hedonic shopping fail to explain shopping

motivations fully. Studies show that consumers do not always act as intelligent beings while they are shopping, revealing that their emotional patterns also influence the purchase decision process, and they are influenced by both hedonic and utilitarian motivations.

Consequently, shopping motivation might be interpreted as a holistic experience. In other words, hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations are not two different fronts, and shopping conditions involve both to a certain extent (Kim, Sullivan and Forney, 2007). According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), consumer behaviors may seem quite complicated as a result of the multi-dimensional interaction between the organism and the environment. Therefore, neither the practical nor the hedonic aspect can be neglected. Thinking that consumers are only smart thinkers, problem solvers or individuals who are motivated with emotional aspects of shopping will take us to a limited point of view. On the contrary, consumers might differ regarding their hedonic or utilitarian shopping motivations, and holistic shopping motivation might be hedonic, utilitarian or balanced based on the relative weight of the objective and subjective components (Berry, Carbone, Haeckel, 2002; Seo and Lee, 2008).

Utilitarian Shopping Motivations

The majority of traditional studies on consumer behaviors are focused on the utilitarian aspect of shopping. Utilitarian shopping is considered as the principle of rational and practical consumer behavior for realizing a particular purpose and finding solutions to problems. Utilitarian shopping motivations are defined as motivations that cause people to purchase "only the goods, services and information they need" based on their rational expectations (Babin et al., 1994; Hae-Sook, 2005).

Utilitarian shopping motivation is based on the idea of consumers to maximize total utility by purchasing products in an efficient and time-saving manner with the minimum effort and trouble. Consumers attempt to maximize tangible utilities and minimize costs of the shopping activity, including money, time and energy (Kim et al., 2007). Consumers experience utilitarian or rational motivation when they meet their needs and fulfill a task or job related to their purposes—thinking that consumers are only interested in planned purchase and considering shopping just as a practical experience will end up in neglecting many intangible and emotional situations and probable consumer experiences (Danziger,2004). Therefore, shopping must be considered as a holistic experience (Kim et al., 2007).

As utilitarian shopping is not related to the emotional aspects of products or services, consumers obtain favor with the functional and objective qualities of products and treat "price, quality and value" as determinant factors in selection of goods or services. Consumers who perform shopping and consumption activities with the influence of these determinants act with the idea of economy and success under the effect of utilitarian factors (Antonides and Raaij, 1998; Chen et al., 2008).

According to Chen et al. (2008), utilitarian shoppers act with the idea of ending their shopping trip successfully by creating a shopping trip plan, tending towards only goods and services they need and buying what they want at the best price. In this context, shopping is related to saving time and resources. Consumers are motivated to buy what they want or need with less time, effort and window-shopping. In other words, consumers are motivated to purchase what they need in the shortest time and with the least effort and benefit from the freedom and controlling utilities of the internet to perform efficient, rational shopping according to their purposes (Chen et al., 2008).

As consumers define consumption as a task in utilitarian shopping, the purchase activity is carried out as "completion of a task," and consumers display a rational consumption attitude (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003:80). Shopping is seen as a "task" in utilitarian shopping and related to purchasing goods or services effectively under appropriate conditions such as considering the product, service and price features before the actual purchase (Hoffman and Novak, 1996), value for the money (Zeithaml, 1988) and judgments of convenience and time savings (Jarvenpaa and Todd, 1997; Teo, 2001). The task is accepted as completed, and shopping comes to an end when they find what they need or look for. Each utilitarian shopping trip does not have to end in a purchase, whereas trips to have information on prices and payment conditions of products are also regarded as outcomes of utilitarian shopping motivation. It is determined that studies deal with utilitarian motivation in the frame of utilitarian values such as effectiveness, goal achieving, saving costs, selection, convenience and weak socialization (Babin et al., 1994; To et al., 2007).

Hedonic Shopping Motivations

The view of hedonic shopping was first dealt with in Hirschman and Holbrook's paper (1982), and focuses on factors that motivate consumers towards hedonic shopping reveal that consumers might see the shopping experience as a pleasure and joy and seek for pleasure for various reasons (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Batra and Ahtola, 1990; Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991; Babin et al., 1994; Spangenberg, Voss and Crowley, 1997; Childers et al., 2001).

Tauber (1972) pointed out that shopping motivations are related to the psychological and social needs of consumers, as well as their motivations for merely owning a product. They classified these motives in two main categories of personal motives such as role-playing, diversion, self-gratification, learning about new trends, physical activity and sensory stimulation and social motives such as social experiences outside the home, communication with others with similar interests, peer group attraction, status and authority and pleasure of bargaining.

Emotional reactions, emotional pleasure, dreaming and aesthetic expectations are prominent features of hedonic shopping. A strong desire, extensive involvement, fantasies and escaping from the pain of reality are all indicators of hedonic shopping. Hedonic shopping allows consumers both to escape from their daily routine and acquire information on new trends and products. Taking hedonic shopping as a subject of study is equivalent to studying pleasure-oriented shopping as this situation defined above is not related to achieving a physical aim or fulfilling a physical task (Chang, Burns and Francis, 2004)

Many studies on the factors that drive people towards hedonic shopping (Batra and Ahtola, 1990; Sheth et al., 1991; Babin et al. 1994; Spangenberg et al., 1997; Childers et al. 2001) have revealed that hedonic shopping is carried out due to several expectations, and therefore, consumers do not act only to have pleasure but seek pleasure for various reasons. In the most comprehensive work on this issue, Arnold and Reynolds (2003) suggest that consumers do shopping for various reasons and experience intense feelings during their shopping activity. They developed a "hedonic shopping motivations" scale and concluded that people do shopping due to six primary motivations, including adventure, idea, socialization, value (to feel the competition, gain value), role (to please others) and gratification. This study is based on the "hedonic shopping motivations" scale developed by Arnold and Reynolds (2003).

Utilitarian and Hedonic Motivations of Online Shopping

Online shopping studies focus on adaptation of physical or traditional shopping theories, models and strategies to online shopping, which is a new marketing channel, and investigation of the reasons why consumers prefer and abstain from an online purchase. This situation is expected to help companies find appropriate strategies to attract consumers' interest and encourage online shopping (Teo, 2006).

Despite apparent differences between online and traditional shopping behaviors, it is apparent that there are similarities between shopping motivations. Therefore, hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations are also valid for online shopping. Beyond buying products or services, online shopping is also defined as the activity of finding online retailers, searching for product information, selecting payment options and communicating with other consumers and retailers. Therefore, online shopping is one of the most popular online activities (Cai and Cude, 2008).

Studies (Childers et al., 2001; Eroglu, Machleit and Davis, 2003) that are particularly emphasizing online shopping environment design point out that, while the utilitarian aspects of online shopping (such as convenience and comfort) are significantly helpful in estimating consumer attitudes and shopping intentions, hedonic features (such as pleasure, enjoyment and gratification) of online shopping play an equally significant role in shaping these behaviors.

Childers et al. (2001) emphasize that an online shopping environment must be made more attractive and entertaining to motivate utilitarian shoppers with useful and interactive components to motivate hedonic shoppers such as various images, videos, colors, music, games and animations (Childers et al., 2001). Shopping means more than a utilitarian experience of meeting the need for a particular service/product. It may be used for several other purposes such as overcoming loneliness, relieving stress, realizing fantasies and escaping one's daily routine. Shopping might turn into internal fun, and the joy of the shopping experience might become a significant determinant of shopping motivation

(Koufaris, Kambil and LaBarbera, 2002).

Hedonic shoppers who add symbolic meanings to shopping and act with pleasure motivation often skim through hobby and auction websites to find products about which they are enthusiastic. Liebermann and Stashevsky (2009) observed that hedonic shoppers who enjoy online shopping turn into more eager shoppers who are more likely to take part in unplanned shopping.

Kim and Shim (2002) suggest that consumers not only gather information or purchase products while shopping but also try to satisfy their experiential and emotional needs.

Keeney (1999) ranked ten fundamental shopping values for electronic shopping and concluded that all of them except "increasing the joy of shopping" involved utilitarian values.

In a study by To et al. (2007) about the effects of utilitarian and hedonic motivations on online purchase and purchase intention, the authors observed that motivations which formed shopping intention and motivated purchasing carried utilitarian qualities.

In addition to hedonic and utilitarian motivation, which are primary motivations in specifying online shopping purchases, other factors must be investigated as well as including cultural features, shopping canal and service/product qualities, price and risk perceptions related to the product. Chiang and Dholakia (2003) studied consumers' online shopping intentions throughout the information-gathering stage, suggesting that acceptable price and product type influenced online shopping intention. It was observed that consumers were more likely to take part in electronic shopping in cases where they thought traditional (physical: offline) shopping was not convenient. In this context, in this paper, descriptive and inferencing statistics will be used to reach information about whether hedonic and utilitarian motivations emerge during online shopping. Hence, to reveal the factors of online shopping motivations and reach the main aims of the paper, the research model will be developed, sampling will be defined, and analysis and the results will be discussed.

Behavioral Intention in Online Shopping

The online purchase intention of consumers raises their willingness to go shopping on the internet. This factor is often measured by the willingness of consumers to purchase, do shopping and make a new purchase. The intention of someone to revisit a website and purchase is seen as an outcome of their attitude towards technology usage. Behavioral intentions related to internet usage and internet shopping are determined by a repetition of purchase, revisit to the relevant website, recommendation of the website to others, positive opinions and comments on the web (Hausman and Siekpe, 2009). Li and Zhang (2002) put forward ideas that support Hausman and Siekpe (2009), emphasizing that the online purchase intention of consumers indicates their willingness to purchase from an internet shop. This factor is generally measured with new purchase/shopping behaviors of consumers or their willingness to purchase/do shopping again. Moreover, online purchase is found strongly related to personal features, seller/service features, website quality, online shopping attitude, online shopping intention and decision-making (Li and Zhang, 2002).

As mentioned above, studies (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Babin et al., 1994; Spangenberg et al., 1997; Jones, Reynolds and Arnold, 2006; Guido, 2006) show that consumers are under the influence of both hedonic and utilitarian motivations while shopping. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed to reveal the impact of hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivation on online shopping intentions. The research model is given in Figure 1.

To et al. (2007) compared utilitarian motivation and hedonic motivation and revealed that utilitarian motivation has a higher effect on searching aim and purchasing intention than hedonic motivation. Their results were in line with those of Ghosh (1998), Keeney (1999), Morganosky and Cude (2000) and Verhoef and Langerak (2001) who reported that internet shopping is mostly directed by utilitarian motivations. Topaloğlu (2012) showed that, in online shopping, hedonic and utilitarian values affect purchasing intention positively.

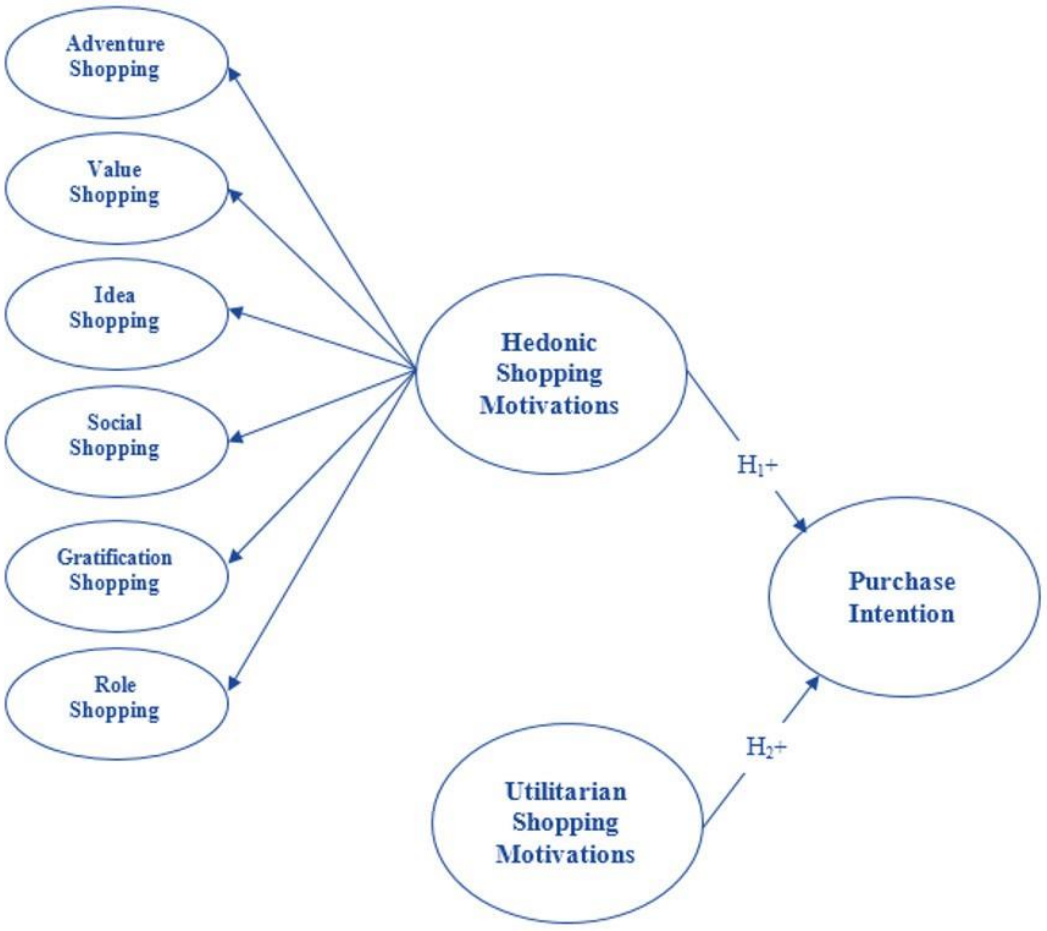
Motivations towards online shopping include both utilitarian and hedonic aspects (Childers et al., 2001). Alba, Lynch, Weitz, Janiszewski, Lutz, Sawyer and Wood, (1997) showed that diversified options may be the main

motivation that could be provided to consumers by internet shopping. Ghosh (1998) stated that ease, information, customization and interaction are primary motivations in internet shopping. Morganosky and Cude (2000) reported ease and time efficiency to be the main factors of online shopping. Keeney (1999) compiled a list of internet shopping values by interviews and discussions. The 10 shopping values presented by the author were utilitarian values except for "increasing the joy of shopping". Blake et al. (2005) reported on some features that are important for the internet customers of commercial websites. Almost all features that were reported were associated with utilitarian people. Previous researchers believed that utilitarian values are important factors for people who shop online. In terms of hedonic motivation, Falk (1997) stated that, for store shopping or internet shopping, passionate stimulation and freedom to search are primary shopping motivations for consumers, and therefore, hedonic motivation is also very important. Mathwick et al. (2001) investigated the experiential value of online shopping where intrinsic experimental value included pleasure and aesthetics. This experiential value should be accepted as hedonic value. Kim and Shim (2002) argued that consumers who get online for shopping do not do this for only collecting information and purchasing products. Additionally, as online shoppers follow utilitarian and hedonic values, they also meet their experience and emotional needs which show that they are like shopping lovers in real life. Parsons (2002) proposed multiple non-functional shopping motivations for those who shop online, and these non-functional motivations referred to hedonic values. In this context, it is seen that there is also hedonic shopping value and motivations in online shopping. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Hedonic Shopping Motivations have a positive impact on Purchase Intention.

H2: Utilitarian Shopping Motivations have a positive impact on Purchase Intention.

FIGURE 1
BIPLOT FOR A CASUAL BLOUSE/TOP



METHOD

Sampling procedure and Data Collection

This is in-depth research, which is one of the specific research types. Its population consisted of consumers who do online shopping in Turkey. Due to the uncertainty of the population and lack of a sampling frame, participants who volunteered to take part in the study with non-probability, convenience sampling were chosen as the sample. In the study, the multiple analysis method of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was utilized. For the analysis in question, an important requirement is the sample size. There is not an absolute standard regarding sample size in SEM applications. "It was shown in the literature that larger samples generally produce more stable solutions with a higher probability of repeatability, but decisions on sample size should be taken based on a set of factors. For example, there are various minimum sample sizes recommended based on the complexity of the model, missing data and the presence of construct with fewer than three indicators. Our model had a total of nine latent constructs and a structure with fewer than three indicators. In this case, the minimum sample size of 500 is recommended (Hair, Anderson, Babin and Black, 2014). Additionally, Kline (1998:112) stated that, to produce consistent results, the ratio of the number of subjects to the model parameters should at least be 5:1, and if this ratio is smaller than 5:1, one should approach the statistical consistency of the results with suspicion. The measurements in our model contained 33 indicators. There were 17 parameters (variance and path coefficients) that needed to be calculated over latent constructs. This way, considering all regression weights and variances that need to be estimated, the total number of parameters becomes 60. If we considered the ratio of 5:1, we would need to have a minimum of 300 participants. In this study, for the consistency of the results, 560 participants were reached. However, after cancellation of surveys for 100 participants with missing or incorrect data, 460 participants constituted the sample. Such a sample size is suitable for the criteria in the literature.

The sample consisted of 460 participants. 51.7% of the respondents were female, and 48.3% were male. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 15 and 35. The number of the single correspondents was higher than that of the married correspondents, while 52% had a bachelor's degree or higher educational status. More than half (55.7%) had 2000 TL or lower monthly income, and 31.1% were academicians. The rates of the civil servants and workers were similar, and they constituted approximately 20% of the entire sample.

MEASURES

As mentioned above, the survey method was used as a data collection tool for the study. The survey included the Online Hedonic Shopping Motivations scale of 18 statements adapted from the studies by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) and Arnold and Reynolds (2003), the Online Utilitarian Shopping Motivations scale of 10 statements adapted from Babin et al. (1994), Deveraj et al. (2002), Overby and Lee (2006), Kim (2006) and Jamal et al. (2006) and the Purchase Intention scale of 5 statements developed with the support of Lin's (2007) study. The scales are the 5-point Likert-type scales (1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree 3: Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree). The "Translation-Back Translation" technique was used in the translation of all scales. The scales were first translated from English to Turkish by experts and then translated from Turkish to English by another expert. As a result of the comparison between the original expressions in the scale and the Turkish text, expressions were edited, and they took their final form. Questions on demographic features were used to evaluate the gender, marital status, age, income level, professional and educational status of the participants. The data were collected through online surveys.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Following the procedure recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1998), first, the structural validity and reliability of the 3 constructs and six dimensions with 33 items were verified via a confirmatory factor analysis. Afterwards, the hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) examines the relationships between variables and enables one to reveal the variables as a summary. In this analysis, the variables that are related are combined as factors (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). Thus, this analysis is also known as dimension reduction and elimination of dependence (Miller, Acton, Fullerton and Maltby, 2002). EFA was used to determine whether utilitarian and hedonic motivations appeared during online shopping or not.

Internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) were calculated for the items constituting the 18-item scale for Online Hedonic Shopping Motivations, 10-item scale for Online Utilitarian Shopping Motivations and 5-item scale for Online Purchase Intention, inter-item correlation matrices, item-total correlations and statistics showing the internal consistency of the remaining variables when a variable is deleted (Alpha if item deleted) were considered to increase the internal homogeneity of the scales, and whether or not some items could be removed was examined based on the increase in the internal consistency coefficients. Firstly, internal consistency tests were applied on the scales, and the Cronbach's alpha values were found respectively as $\alpha 1 = 0.904$, $\alpha 2 = 0.851$ and $\alpha 3 = 0.868$. Whether or not there was any item not representing the scales was investigated by utilizing the aforementioned statistics. One item (UM3: Shopping as I wish makes me feel good.) in the Online Utilitarian Shopping Motivations Scale was determined to not represent the scale, and the internal consistency analysis was repeated by removing the item from the scale. After the repeated internal consistency analysis, the Cronbach's alpha value of the Online Utilitarian Shopping Motivations Scale was found as $\alpha 2 = 0.875$. After removing the item disrupting the internal consistency of the scale, upon determining one item in each scale that did not represent the scale, "Principal Component Analysis" was carried out for the variables in the research model of the study.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is a multi-variable analysis type that allows more meaningful and summarized presentation of data based on the relationships among the data (Kurtuluş, 1998:482). In EFA, without a certain preliminary expectation or hypothesis, the factorial structure of the data is determined based on the factor weights (Sümer, 2000:52). The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) values for the suitability of factor analysis were found as 0.862 for the Online Hedonic Shopping Motivations, 0.876 for the Online Utilitarian Shopping Motivations and 0.854 for the Online Purchase Intention. These values were higher than the critical value of 0.70 (Malhotra, 2004), and they show the sufficiency of the sample for factor analysis. In addition to this, for classification of the variables that would disrupt the factor analysis, "anti-image" coefficients were also examined one by one, and no statement that needed to be removed could be encountered. Based on the factor loads, 2 statements from the Online Utilitarian Shopping Motivations Scale (UM1: It is essential for me to complete a shopping trip as I planned. and UM10: Online shopping provides me an economic favor.) that had a lower factor load than 0.50 and were not completely separated, as well as 1 statement in the Online Purchase Intention Scale (PI2: I will probably suggest online shopping for my friends.), were removed from the analysis.

After removing the aforementioned statements, the factor analysis was repeated, and as the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) values were 0.862 for Online Hedonic Shopping Motivations, 0.851 for Online Utilitarian Shopping Motivations and 0.802 for Online Purchase Intention, these values were higher than the critical value of 0.70 and showed the suitability of the sample for factor analysis. For determination of the variables that would disrupt the factor analysis, "anti-image" coefficients were examined, and upon finding no value smaller than 0.50, it was decided that no item should be removed from the analysis. As a result of the analysis, the Online Hedonic Shopping Motivations Scale was collected under 18 items and 6 factors (dimensions), while the Online Utilitarian Shopping Motivations Scale was collected under 7 items and 1 factor.

Shopping motivations were first subjected to exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to see whether the same factor structure could be obtained. Thus, six dimensions of Hedonic Motivations were obtained, which together explained 76.578% of the total variance. Utilitarian Motivations had a one-dimensional structure, and the variance explained was 54.9%. The findings of the factor analysis are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR SHOPPING MOTIVATIONS

Factors	Item	Item Loading	Variance Extracted %
Hedonic Shopping Motivations			
Adventure Shopping	I find shopping stimulating.	,869	14,208
	To me, shopping is an adventure	,861	
	Shopping makes me feel like I am in my own universe.	,794	
Idea Shopping	I go shopping to see what new products are available.	,829	14,058
	I go shopping to keep up with the trends.	,812	
	I go shopping to keep up with the new fashions.	,800	
Role Shopping	I enjoy shopping for my friends and family.	,872	13,768
	I like shopping for others because when they feel good I feel good.	,855	
	I enjoy shopping around to find the perfect gift for someone.	,798	
Value Shopping	I enjoy looking for discounts when I shop.	,771	13,647
	For the most part, I go shopping when there are sales	,765	
	I try to get the cheapest product when I shop.	,735	
	I do shopping to take advantage of discount times.	,658	
Social Shopping	Shopping with my friends and family is a bonding experience.	,818	11,489
	I enjoy socializing with others when I shop.	,817	
	Shopping is a good opportunity to socialize.	,636	
Gratification Shopping	To me, shopping is a way to relieve stress.	,843	9,409
	When I'm in a down mood, I go shopping to make me feel better.	,822	
Utilitarian Shopping Motivations	I like to feel smart about my shopping trip.	,768	54,90
	It is important that I buy the product I really need my shopping trip.	,759	
	On a particular shopping trip, it is important to find items I am looking for.	,751	
	Online shopping is easier and more convenient than traditional shopping.	,746	
	I save time with online shopping.	,730	
	Shopping as I wish makes me feel good.	,723	
	Online shopping provides me fast shopping opportunity.	,711	

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory factor analysis is used to verify an implicit structure that is determined via EFA (Byrne, 2010). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used in this study to test the validity of the factors revealed with exploratory factor analysis and statistically find out to what extent they overlapped with the model revealed in the conceptual framework.

The fit indices of the six dimensions of Online Shopping Motivations with the available data were satisfactory (χ^2/ df=3.143; GFI=.920; AGFI=.885; TLI=.928; CFI=944; RMSEA=.068) (Mishra and Datta, 2011; Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger and Müller, 2003). As the indicator weight of each dimension obtained with the Maximum Likelihood -ML- method was 0.83-0.91 for Adventure Shopping, 0.57-0.79 for Value Shopping, 0.74-0.93 for Role Shopping, 0.76-0.91 for Idea Shopping, 0.71-0.82 for Social Shopping and 0.86-0.89 for Gratification Shopping, it is possible to state that the item factor loads represented the relevant dimensions successfully. All Coefficients were found significant on the $p<0.001$ level.

Validity and Reliability Analysis

The internal consistency of each latent construct of the model was found with the Cronbach's alpha, Composite reliability (C.R.) coefficients and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

TABLE 2
VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY ANALYSIS RESULTS OF DIMENSIONS

Structures	Cronbach Alpha	C.R.*	AVE**
Hedonic Shopping Motivations			
Adventure Shopping	,890	,891	,733
Value Shopping	,782	,785	,482
Idea Shopping	,873	,876	,703
Social Shpping	,791	,797	,566
Gratification Shpping	,868	,858	,765
Role Shopping	,859	,863	,680
Utilitarian Shopping Motivaions	,855	,857	,665
Purchase Intention	,849	,854	,595

*Composite Reliability (C.R.): $(\sum\lambda)^2 / [(\sum\lambda)^2 + \sum e]$
**Average Variance Extracted (AVE) : $\sum \lambda^2 / [\sum\lambda^2 + \sum e]$;e=1- λ^2.

According to the findings shown in Table 2, it is possible to say that each dimension had internal consistency as their Cronbach's alpha values were above the critical value of 0.70 (Cronbach, 1951). The C.R. values were above 0.70, and the AVE values (except .482) were above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010). Nevertheless, values below 0.50 are also acceptable in cases where all other reliability values are satisfactory (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

On the other hand, convergent and discriminant validity were evaluated for construct validity. The C.R. values must be higher than the AVE values, and the AVE values must be greater than 0.50 for convergent validity (Hair et al., 2010). This was the case in our study.

For the discriminant validity of the model, an unrestricted model with free correlations was tested against a restricted model where correlations between dimensions were equalized to 1 (Bagozzi et al., 1991).

TABLE 3
DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY ANALYSIS OF ONLINE HEDONIC SHOPPING MOTIVATIONS

Models	χ^2	df
Model Restricted with ρ = 1	531,928	134
Unrestricted Model	374,046	119
$\Delta\chi^2$	157,882	
Δdf		15

The hypothesis tested in this analysis was H0: ρ = 1. Here, ρ shows the correlation coefficients between the dimensions. $\Delta\chi^2$ and degrees of freedom between the restricted and unrestricted models were taken to decide on Δdf according to the χ^2 distribution table.

According to the findings shown in Table 3, the Δdf hypothesis that all constructs are the same construct was rejected as the critical value was 15 $\chi^2.05$ = 24.996, and $\Delta\chi^2$ =157.882 >24.996. This means that each dimension of the Online Hedonic Shopping Motivations Scale represented a different construct, enabling discriminant validity.

Moreover, the reliability criteria were also secured for "Online Utilitarian Motivations."

Second-Order Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Hedonic Motivations

The result of the Second-Order Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Hedonic Motivations and standardized regression coefficients for each construct are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4
THE RESULTS OF SECOND-ORDER CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR ONLINE HEDONIC SHOPPING MOTIVATIONS

Hedonic Shopping Motivations	Standardized Regression Coefficients
Role Shopping	.55*
Value Shopping	.66*
Adventure Shopping	.69*
Social Shopping	.74*
Gratification Shopping	.75*
Idea Shopping	.75*

Fit Indices					
χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
421,664/128=3,294	,909	,878	,923	,935	,071

*p<0.001

Second-Order CFA results for Online Hedonic Shopping Motivations: χ^2/df=3.294; GFI=.909; AGFI=.878; TLI=.923; CFI=935; RMSEA=.071. The Standardized Regression Coefficients were found as .69 for Adventure Shopping, .66 for Value Shopping, .55 for Role Shopping, .75 for Idea Shopping, .74 for Social Shopping and .75 for Gratification Shopping, and the significance level of each coefficient was p<0.001. Thus, it is possible to say that the Online Hedonic Shopping Motivations Scale was well-represented by six dimensions.

Evaluation of Measurement Model

The measurement model was evaluated regarding the fit indices, regression weights, and modification indices (MI) before testing the constructed model. Thus, fit indices of measurement model obtained with CFA were χ^2/df=2.861; GFI=.878; AGFI=.852; TLI=.908; CFI=.919; RMSEA=0.64. These results showed that the model needed to be improved. To do this, the Modification Indices (MI) of the model were evaluated, concluding that the error value of "HS1. Shopping is an excellent opportunity to socialize." observed variable that represents the Social Shopping (HS) dimension of Online Hedonic Shopping Motivations had a significant covariance with "HS2. Shopping with my friends and family is a bonding experience." and "HS3. I enjoy socializing with others when I shop." variables. On the other hand, the evaluation of modification indices on the factors that constitute Online Purchase Intention (PI) showed that the value error of the "PI2. I will probably recommend online shopping for my friends." observed variable had a significant covariance with other variables. Therefore, the HS1 and PI2 variables were removed from the analysis, and the Structural Equation Model was re-tested. After elimination of the HS1 and PI2 statements, the fit indices of the model were χ^2/df=2.651; GFI=.891; AGFI=.866; TLI=.920; CFI=.930; RMSEA=.060.

The discriminant validity test results of the measurement model are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5
MEASUREMENT MODEL DISCRIMINATION VALIDITY ANALYSIS

Models	χ^2	df
Model Restricted with ρ = 1	860,507	268
Unrestricted Model	702,609	265
$\Delta\chi^2$	157,898	
Δdf		3

According to findings shown in Table 5, it is possible to state that each construct was different, and the discriminant validity was confirmed as 3 $\chi^2.05 = 7.815$ and $\Delta\chi^2 = 157.898 > 7.815$.

STRUCTURAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES TESTING

The fit indices and hypothesis test results of the model are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

TABLE 6
STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL FIT INDEXES

		Fit Indexes				
Structural Equation Model	χ^2/df	**GFI**	**AGFI**	**TLI**	**CFI**	**RMSEA**
	629,673/243=2,591	,901	,877	,925	,934	,059

R^2 (Online Purchase Intention) = ,18

TABLE 7
RESULTS FOR THE HYPOTHESES TESTS

			Std. Reg. Weight	C.R.*	p	Hypothesis Results
Hedonic	→	P. Intention	,157	2,925	,003	H_1 Accepted
Utilitarian	→	P. Intention	,394	7,020	***	H_2 Accepted

*C.R.: Critic Ratio

***p<0,001

The fit indices indicated that the model fit the available data well. The hypotheses of the study were accepted as the model fit was satisfactory, and the estimated structural coefficients were significant. In this context, as seen in the first hypothesis of the study (H1), Online Hedonic Shopping Motivations had a positive impact on Online Purchase Intention (.016; p<0.001). Furthermore, the second hypothesis (H2) was accepted as well: Online Utilitarian Shopping Motivations had a positive impact on Online Purchase Intention (.039; p<0.001). As seen here, Online Utilitarian Shopping Motivations had a relatively more substantial impact on Online Purchase Intention than Online Hedonic Shopping Motivations. According to the R^2 value, Online Purchase Intention was explained by Online Hedonic and Utilitarian Shopping Motivations on a level of 0.18.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Theories, models and strategies that are valid for conventional or physical shopping must be adapted to online shopping as an alternative marketing channel, and factors that influence consumers' online purchasing intention must be investigated in studies on online shopping. In this context, the goal of this study was to investigate the effects of hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations on online purchase intention.

Though classified in different ways in the literature, it is claimed that the consumption phenomenon is based on two main motivations: utilitarian (product or goal-oriented) and hedonic (pleasure-oriented) (Doğrul, 2012). Many studies (Spangenberg et al., 1997; Overby and Lee, 2006; Kim, 2006; Guido, 2006; To et al., 2007) confuse "hedonic and utilitarian motivations" with "hedonic and utilitarian values" and use these concepts without a clear distinction and scale. The detailed findings of this study on hedonic and utilitarian shopping will help reveal a clear distinction

between the concepts of "hedonic and utilitarian motivations" and "hedonic and utilitarian values."

Kim and Shim (2002) suggested that consumers who prefer online shopping do not only gather product information or purchase products but also try to meet their experiential and emotional needs (To et al., 2007). Studies are particularly emphasizing online shopping environment design point out that while the practical aspects of online shopping are significantly helpful in estimating consumer attitudes and shopping intentions, the hedonic features of online shopping play a key role in shaping these behaviors (Childers et al., 2001). In this context, this study tested and accepted two hypotheses that utilitarian and hedonic shopping motivations influence online purchasing intentions.

To et al. (2007) studied the effects of utilitarian and hedonic motivations on online research intentions, purchasing intentions and purchasing behavior, and they observed the factors that create research intention and motivate purchasing to carry utilitarian and hedonic features. The researchers mentioned above studied the effects of utilitarian and hedonic motivations on research intention and the effects of research intention on purchasing intention. Utilitarian and hedonic shopping motivations were measured with utilitarian and hedonic values in the aforementioned study. In this context, our study is different from that study as the concepts of utilitarian and hedonic value were used there instead of utilitarian and hedonic shopping motivations here, and the direct impact of hedonic motivations on online purchasing intention was not dealt with in their study. On the other hand, their findings overlap with ours as they detected the direct and positive impact of utilitarian motivations on purchasing intentions in online shopping.

As mentioned before, Arnold and Reynolds' (2003) "Hedonic Shopping Motivations" scale for conventional shopping was adapted to online shopping to find out online hedonic shopping motivations that influence online purchasing intentions. Arnold and Reynolds (2003) determined six factors in their study. These six factors developed by the researchers (adventure shopping, gratification shopping, idea shopping, social shopping, role shopping and value shopping) were also verified for online shopping as the common factors with our study. This scale developed by Arnold and Reynolds (2003) was adapted well to online shopping, as well. Moreover, the Adventure Shopping factor explained 14.206% of the extracted variance, taking the first rank. These conclusions indicated that consumers do not only meet their needs but are also motivated when their shopping activity relaxes them, and is approved and admired by others.

The active role of the internet in our lives has encouraged people of all ages to use this significant technological advancement. The internet has become a part of the lives of both end-users and businesses. The online shopping behavior of consumers causes both researchers and businesses on online shopping platforms to take specific actions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUSINESS

Essential utilities offered to consumers with online shopping such as saving time and money, purchasing products with lower prices and being capable of buying the product at any time have become quite well-known methods used by companies to be different. Knowing about the online shopping motivations of consumers and the utilitarian and hedonic factors underlying these motivations is becoming increasingly important for businesses to reach consumers and specify goods and service qualities. Therefore, businesses operating on the internet must master online shopping motivations and the utilitarian and hedonic aspects of these motivations.

It is becoming inevitable for businesses to know about the advantages of online shopping over conventional shopping, become aware of advantageous factors in online shopping and understand frequently encountered problems. It is also clear that people's attitudes, opinions and prejudices on using technology will guide many administrative and technological strategic decisions of companies operating online on several issues, including website design, online advertising, product differentiation and distribution strategies. Businesses that are aware of what influence and motivate consumers towards online shopping will have the chance to see and meet consumers' needs and demands.

Businesses operating online need to focus on consumers without online shopping experience and become aware of why consumers do not take part in online shopping.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS

This study aimed to explain the impact of hedonic and utilitarian motivations on purchasing intentions in an inter-disciplinary framework from the perspective of information systems and with a focus on the concept of shopping changed by technological advancements and the internet. Conventional shopping motivations were tested and verified for online shopping. The review of the literature and previous studies showed that studies have not yet made a clear distinction between utilitarian and hedonic shopping motivations and utilitarian and hedonic values, although these concepts are different to each other. Therefore, researchers would instead study this point in a particular way in their future studies.

As the number of studies in Turkey on the concept of utilitarian and hedonic shopping motivations is lower than international studies, the findings of our study are expected to shed light on future studies that deal with hedonic and utilitarian motivations influencing online purchasing intentions. Our study concluded that utilitarian and hedonic shopping motivations have positive effects on online purchasing intentions. However, future studies that consider the probable effects of other variables on purchasing intentions and deal with the concept of online shopping must be supported by quantitative methods considering several variables such as the personal characteristics of consumers, perceived utility and risks perceived towards goods or services. In addition to these, it is needed to also investigate cultural characteristics, features of shopping channels and the properties of the product or service that is aimed to be obtained.

LIMITATIONS

Instantaneous collection of study data at one time focuses on the consumer expectation formation stage and prevents precise definition of changing consumer perceptions. The convenience sampling method of the study does not allow generalization of the results of the study. Therefore, future studies would preferably be carried out in consideration of these limitations.

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APPENDIX

STATEMENT CODES

Codes	Statements
HM1	To me, shopping is an adventure.
HM2	I find shopping stimulating.
HM3	Shopping makes me feel like I am in my universe.
HD1	For the most part, I go shopping when there are sales.
HD2	I enjoy looking for discounts when I shop.
HD3	I try to get the cheapest product when I shop.
HD4	I do shopping to take advantage of discount times.
HF1	I go shopping to keep up with the new fashions.
HF2	I go shopping to see what new products are available.
HF3	I go shopping to keep up with the new trends.
HS1	Shopping is an excellent opportunity to socialize.
HS2	Shopping with my friends and family is a bonding experience.
HS3	I enjoy socializing with others when I shop..
HR1	When I'm in a down mood, I go shopping to make me feel better.
HR2	To me, shopping is a way to relieve stress.
HB1	I like shopping for others; because when they feel right I f.
HB2	I enjoy shopping for my friends and family.
HB3	I enjoy shopping around to find the perfect gift for someone.
UM1	It is essential for me to complete a shopping trip as I planned.
UM2	On a particular shopping trip, it is essential to find the items I'm looking for.
UM3	Shopping as I wish makes me feel good.
UM4	I like to feel smart about my shopping trip.
UM5	Visiting other online shops to end shopping upsets me.
UM6	Online shopping provides me fast shopping opportunity.
UM7	I save time with online shopping.
UM8	It is essential that I buy the product I need for my shopping trip.
UM9	Online shopping is more comfortable and more convenient than traditional shopping.
UM10	Online shopping provides me an economic favor.
PI1	I will keep shopping online in the future.
PI2	I will probably suggest online shopping for my friends.
PI3	I will buy my needs online in the future.
PI4	I feel I am doing something right with online shopping.
PI5	I believe that online shopping is better than traditional shopping.

HM: Hedonic Shopping Motivations, UM: Utilitarian Shopping Motivations, PI: Purchase Intention

Developing a socioecological model for tweens' consumption of branded apparel

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ABSTRACT

Much of the research into children and their consumer behaviour has been predicated on theories of cognitive development. Developmental approaches have been criticised for focusing primarily on cognitive development and neglecting other factors that may significantly influence a child's consumption behaviour. This study proposes Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Framework for Human Development (1979) as an alternative method for understanding the environmental factors that influence tweens' consumer behaviour. Ecological models emphasize the social context of behaviour and seek to discover and understand the process and conditions that ultimately shape human behaviour. Theories of consumer culture and the sociology of consumption are largely silent when it comes to African children. The purpose of this study was to develop a socioecological model to understand tweens' consumer behaviour in the apparel industry. This was achieved by way of a convergent parallel mixed-method study which included 192 respondents and 60 focus group participants. The findings suggest that there are a myriad of environmental factors that influence branded apparel consumption in tweens. The results may assist marketers and practitioners alike to understand the South African tween consumer.

Keywords: ecological models, tweens, environmental factors, consumer culture, materialism, brands, apparel

Research on children and their consumer power has shown that these young consumers have more financial clout as their discretionary income and power to influence their parent's purchases have increased (Charry & Demoulin, 2014; Lopez & Rodriguez, 2018; Ellis & Maikoo, 2018). In South Africa, this spending power and influence was estimated at R112 billion per annum by the year 2016 (Duffett, 2016, cited in, Ellis & Maikoo, 2018:434). Consequently, for marketers, the child market is one that is so lucrative it cannot be ignored. Over the last three decades, the study of consumption and consumer culture has experienced significant growth and sustained interest (Burns & Fawcett, 2012; Gbadamosi, 2015). At the same time, academic interest into children as "social actors" has grown significantly due to the growth of the child consumer market (Cook, 2004; Morrow, 2011). However, despite this, theories of consumer culture and the sociology of consumption are largely silent when it comes to children, particularly in the African context.

If children are now active participants in contemporary consumer culture, then it is imperative to understand their consumption practices to situate them in theories of consumer culture. Children need to be made part of the epistemology of consumption by acknowledging them as socio-economic actors and significant objects for consumption (Cook, 2008:222). They must be brought into the theories of consumption not by merely appending them into existing

conceptions and theoretical ideologies but by recognising them as an important, independent consumer market. Children must be viewed as active constructors of their individual and social identities (Nain et al., 2008; Nain & Spotswood, 2015; Mingazova, 2018). As the interest in children and young consumers grows, there is concurrently a need to understand the contextual influences on the consumption practices of children. Additionally, there is a need to consider marketing's role in conjunction with other social and cultural influences in shaping the child consumer and how these influences contribute to how children understand and construct associated brand meanings (Watkins et al. 2016; Watkins et al. 2017; Mingazova, 2018).

Much of the research into children and their consumption behaviour has been predicated on child development theories. Based on Piaget's (1960) theory of cognitive development and in marketing expanded on by Belk et al. (1984) and Roedder-John (1999), these approaches have been criticised for focusing primarily on cognitive development and neglecting other factors that may significantly influence a child's consumption behaviour (Nairn et al. 2008; Vaisto, 2009; Nairn & Spotswood, 2015; Mingazova, 2018). Nairn et al. (2008) provide three motivations for research that broadens Piaget's framework. Firstly, Piaget's model focuses on chronological age while other pertinent influences such as socioeconomic class, gender, race and ethnicity, which may have significant influences, are forgotten. Secondly, since the approach is developmental, it takes on a primarily cognitive perspective and essentially ignores the "social dynamics of interpretation, emotion and peer group influence" (Nairn et al. 2008:629). Lastly, they argue that this approach sees child consumers as "frozen in time" and isolated from other influences of society and culture. For these reasons, the current study proposes the socioecological model as an alternative theory for understanding child consumers in South Africa.

Ecological models emphasise the social context of consumption and seek to discover and understand the process and conditions that ultimately shape human behaviour (Kilanowski 2017:295). Social context includes all aspects of the position that is occupied by a person in society including the specific levels of human interaction such as family, peers and the local community (Donald et al. 2014:2). Socio-ecological theories are predicated on the reality that the lives of children are influenced by wider legislation, theoretical and scholarly approaches, government policy and the people they interact with (Taylor et al. 2013:3). Attempting to understand the development of tween consumers from a socio-ecological standpoint means that issues within the home, family, community and the wider society must be taken into consideration.

The purpose of this study was to develop a socioecological model to understand tween consumer behaviour in the apparel industry. This paper responds to calls for more research perspectives in the African context with regards to marketing to children. The vast amount of literature on the consumption habits and patterns of children focuses primarily on American and European children with very little attention being placed on the African child (Delport, 2015; Ellis & Maikoo, 2018). The paper provides an overview of the socioecological model in light of child consumers. This is followed by a presentation of the research methodology, results and findings. Lastly, the paper offers a discussion of the implication of the research in light of the research objectives.

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

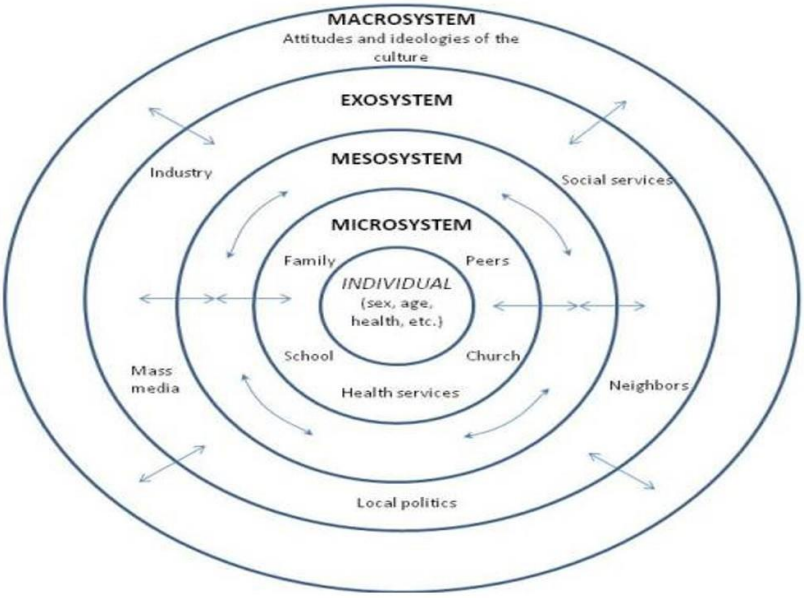
Socioecological models

The narrow scope of developmental psychology theories with regards to human development gave rise to the advancement of socio-ecological theories that sought to bridge a gap between behavioural theories that analyse small settings and anthropological theories that focus on larger settings (Piscopo, 2004; Donald et al. 2014). Socioecological theories posit that there are multiple levels of influence in human behaviour and, as a result, that behaviour both shapes and is shaped by the social environment (Kilanowsky, 2017; Caperon et al. 2019). Social context includes all aspects of the position that is occupied by a person in society including the specific levels of human interaction such as family, peers and the local community (Donald et al. 2014:2). Ecological theories are based on "the principle

of interdependence between a person and their physical environment" (Eloff & Swart, 2018:273). The fundamental assumption of ecological models is that all things in nature, and by extension, human interaction, are related to one another in a complex but systemic way.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Framework for Human Development

FIGURE 1
BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



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Developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner in the 1970s as a conceptual model for understanding human behaviour, the socio-ecological model (SEM) was formalised as a theory in the 1980s (Kilanowski 2017:295). Bronfenbrenner argued that child development is embedded with multiple overarching systems which influence the child and are in turn influenced by the child (Woolfolk, 2007:73). According to this model, to gain an understanding of human development, the whole system in which the individual child grows must be considered. This holistic approach emphasizes the interconnectedness of all elements of human development (Donald et al. 2014:40). The model is concerned with how the individual interacts with the different elements of the environment in which he or she exists. The environment is any event or condition that exists outside of the person and either influences or is influenced by that person. Interaction, on the other hand, refers to the exchanges that are reciprocal in nature which take place between the person or persons and the objects and symbols present in their immediate environment. This model recognises the synergistic way in which the individual is the sum of all the parts of their environment (Eloff & Swart, 2018:273). As illustrated in figure 1, the basic premise of the model is that at the centre of the system is the individual who is then surrounded by various other systems.

Individual

At the core of this ecological model is the individual. This level includes all the interpersonal characteristics that may potentially influence consumer behaviour. At this level lies the personal factors that can influence a child's life (Donald et al. 2014:45). These factors include age, gender, personality traits, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, skills, cognitive development, resilience and any other factors that may influence their lives (Robinson 2008; Donald et al. 2014; Elderberry, 2016). At the individual level "social behaviour is explained in terms of internal dispositions, or processes, which include personality traits, emotions and cognitive mechanisms" (Swartz et al. 2008:305). With regards to relationships with brands at the individual level, previous studies have shown how chronological age affects brand meaning (Arnas et al. 2016), how gender influences materialistic values (Tifferet and Hersteinand,

2012), and how race and culture affect the development of consumer culture (Brusdal & Frones, 2014) which may, in turn, lead to the development of consumerist attitudes, such a deep desire for branded possessions.

Microsystems

The microsystem, otherwise known as the interpersonal level, includes all systems with which the child has close proximal interactions and contain the roles, relationships and activity patterns that essentially "shape many aspects of cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual development" (Donald et al. 2014:45). In this situational level, behaviour is a result of the interaction with other individuals or particular situational contexts (Swartz et al. 2008:305). This layer of the system is the closest to the child and represents the structures to which the child has the most direct contact such as family, friends, classmates, teachers and peers which provide support, social identity and role definition (Robinson, 2008:398). The microsystem is the core environment in which the child initially learns about life and learns how to live (Donald et al. 2014; Eloff & Swart, 2018). Research has shown that relationships at this level have the greatest influence on consumer behaviour of tweens (Kerrane et al. 2012; Hemar-Nicolas, 2015). For instance, the opinion of peers has been shown to have a marked influence on the desire of tweens to possess branded apparel. This is because peer pressure often fosters materialistic attitudes in children and leads to them wanting more and end up being discontent (Lenka & Vandana, 2015:870). The current study sought to understand which structures in the microsystem influence tween consumers.

Mesosystem

This system connects the various systems in which the child, parent and family live. It represents the connections and processes that exist between the two or more settings in which the developing child lives (Piscpo, 2004:44). It is a set of microsystems that are in continuous interaction with one another; therefore, mesosystems provide connections between the different structures of the child's microsystem (Donald et al., 2014:46). For example, the connections that exist between the child's parents and his teachers, the connections between the child's neighbourhood and the church are all parts of the mesosystem. Therefore, what happens at home and in the peer group may influence how the child reacts and responds at school, and vice versa. For example, in a study on the impact of consumer environments on the consumption patterns of children with regards to brands, Page and Ridgeway (2001) found that 'neighbourhood of origin' played a role in the consumer behaviour of adolescents, particularly with children from disparate socioeconomic backgrounds.

Exosystems

This system represents the environment or the greater social system where the child may not necessarily be a direct participant or does not directly function. Although the child may not be directly involved in this system, the exosystem may influence people who have proximal relationships with him or her in the mesosystem (Donald et al. 2014:46). This level contains "all the linkages and processes between two or more settings, one of which does not contain the child but in which events that occur in that environment will indirectly influence or impact the immediate settings in which the child lives" (Piscopo, 2004:44). The child may not be directly involved in this system but will feel the positive or negative forces that may result as an interaction with their own system. The main exosystems that influence the child include parent's workplace, social networks of the family, neighbourhood, local politics, mass media and industry (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1986). For the current study, the exosystem of interest is the mass media. Previous studies with children have shown the influence of the media on brand knowledge (Dotson & Hyatt, 2000); brand consciousness (Nelson & McLeod, 2005) and brand consumption (Lenka & Vandana, 2015).

Macrosystems

The macrosystem includes dominant social and economic structures that consist of the cultural values, norms, beliefs, practices customs and laws of the society that influence all other social systems (Donald et al. 2014:46). It refers to the patterns of ideology and organisation of a society or social group and can be regarded as the "societal blueprint" for a given society. Macrosystems also include the cultural or social contexts of different social groups such as social class, ethnic grouping and religious affiliations (Robinson, 2008; Townsend & Foster, 2011). This is the outermost layer in the child's environment, which helps to hold together the various threads of the child's life. This system includes the belief systems, customs, material resources, bodies of knowledge, lifestyles, opportunity

structures and hazards that are embedded in the broader system (Piscopo, 2004:44). Essentially, this is the system that governs the what, how, where and when of human interactions. The current study sought to understand the influence of South African belief systems, customs and lifestyles on the consumption behaviour of tween consumers.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

An analysis of the extant literature on tween consumers resulted in the development of two main objectives. The primary objective of the study was to develop a socioecological model for tweens consumption of branded apparel. This was motivated by an identified gap in literature whereby there are no models of this nature. This model is intended to contribute to the understanding of the tween consumer from an African perspective. The secondary objective was to profile the South African tween consumer based on consumer behaviour with regards to branded apparel. While there exists a vast amount of literature describing and defining tweens, much of it is based on western tweens, neglecting South African tweens. In addition, while the use of ecological models to understand human behaviour has been widely used in the health sciences, no studies were found by the author applying this model to consumer behaviour in the apparel industry with specific regard to child consumers, more especially in the African context. The scope of the study was limited to apparel consumption, particularly branded apparel as this was identified in the pilot study as the area in which pre-teens are most interested. The scope was also limited to tween consumers, aged 10-14 years. The two research question of the study were: 'what environmental factors influence South African tween consumer behaviour' and 'what is the impact of socio-cultural factors and socialisation agents on brand-related behaviours of South African tweens'.

The research focused on tweens for two reasons. Firstly, since the emergence of the "tween girl" and the related "feminine commercial persona", there has been a sharp focus on this potentially lucrative space between childhood and teenagehood (Cody, 2012:288). Tweens are targeted by marketers more than any other group because they have been said to have more purchasing power than other children of their age in any generation (Chan et al. 2011:67). However, in South Africa, this is still an under-researched group hence a need for empirical studies. Secondly, tweens are very appealing to marketers not only for their personal consumption but for the influence that they exert on their parents (Chan et al. 2011; Kerrane et al. 2012; Ellis & Maikoo, 2018). Given their level of influence, marketers and practitioners alike have a vested interest in understanding this cohort hence research in this regard is immensely valuable.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Given the scope and research objectives, the study employed a convergent parallel mixed-method research approach to allow for triangulation of the research data. In this type of design, when attempting to address the research questions, the researcher collects quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously to develop a complete understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Maree, 2016:318). The selection of this approach was motivated by a lack of empirical research and theoretical frameworks regarding tweens consumers and their engagements in consumer culture. Additionally, this approach was selected because it advocates for the collection of diverse but complementary data on the same phenomenon (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017:181).

Sampling and Data Collection

The target population for the study was primary school children aged between 10 and 14. These belong to the "tween" segment. This is an age-defined cohort whose concept is based on the idea that these children are "in between childhood and adolescence (Chan et al. 2011:67). While the epistemology of the term indicates that it is short for the word 'tweenager', the age range itself has varied from 8 – 14 years [Lindstrom, 2004] to a limited 11 – 12 years [Dibley & Baker, 2001] (Lloyd-Parkes & Doherty, 2012:1). While the tween cohort has largely been defined to include both preteens and early teens, there have been ideological differences between scholars and authors concerning the age range. The respondents included tweens from the 4 main population groups in South Africa, namely Black,

White, Coloured and Indian. The respondents were sampled from primary schools in Gauteng using a non-probability convenience sampling approach. This sampling method was employed given that to access school children, at least 3 levels of gatekeeper consent needed to be acquired hence it was deemed most expedient. The research objectives and the shortcomings of this method were considered with respect to bias and generalisability (Hedt & Pagano, 2011; Leedy & Omrod, 2014).

The quantitative data were collected using self-completion questionnaires while the qualitative data were collected using focus groups. A total of 221 questionnaires were administered and 214 completed questionnaires were returned. Of these, 192 were included in the final analysis as some had to be discarded due to failure of the tweens to fill in the questionnaire appropriately. To determine the number and composition of focus groups that were necessary to yield meaningful results, Guest et al. (2017:18) determined that 80% of all themes were discoverable within two to three focus groups while 90% of all themes were discoverable within three to six. In light of this information, 6 focus groups were deemed to be sufficient to gather the insights needed to address the research questions. Each of the 6 focus groups was comprised of 10 respondents. With the exception of focus group 6, the focus groups were comprised of an equal number of boys and girls.

The measurement instrument consisted of four sections. Section A of the survey instrument (questionnaire) was designed to generate four (4) classes of demographic data, namely: age, gender, grade and race. An additional demographic variable, 'socioeconomic background' was included in the data set during the analysis. The researcher used the location of the school to determine the socio-economic level of each of the respondents.

Section B was concerned with the consumption symbolism that is engaged by the tweens. The research used the concept of cool vs uncool to determine how tweens use brands as consumption symbols. These questions required the tweens to describe their interactions with brands as well as those of their peers or people in their racial and social classes. The first 15 questions were measured on a Likert scale labelled from No, Not at all to Yes, Very much. Likert scale questions capture the intensity of the respondents' feelings on a statement based on the extent to which they agree or disagree (Burns et al. 2017:209). The rest of the questions included dichotomous, matching and multiple-choice questions.

Section C in the questionnaire focused on the consumer socialisation of the tweens. The main aim of this section was to identify the socialisation agents responsible for the development of tweens as consumers. The study also intended to understand if the tweens recognise the main influencers of their consumption patterns and behaviours. This section consisted of 9 open-ended questions and included four YES/NO dichotomous scale questions.

Section D enquired of the tweens concerning their usage of technology in relation to consumer behaviour, particularly with regard to social media. This was supplemented by the focus group questions that addressed the influence of celebrities and celeb culture. There were 7 questions relating to media usage. The first two were multiple-choice questions concerning the various media tools that the tweens use. The third question asked the tweens to name social media platforms that they used which not mentioned in the previous questions. The last four questions were YES/NO dichotomous questions regarding the use of social media and tweens' desire for possessions as seen on television or the internet.

The last section of the questionnaire included questions on materialism and material culture. The review of literature on the sociology of consumption in relation to consumer culture found that materialism is one of the key variables to be understood with regards to children as consumers, given that the tweens of the 21st century are growing up in the most consumption-centric generation of all time. The study sought to understand children's engagements with material culture and how this contributes to their social development as consumers. Some of the questions in this section were adapted from the materialism scale proposed by Richins & Dawson (1992). This section consisted of 8 Likert scale questions arranged from no, not at all to yes, very much and 15 YES/NO dichotomous questions.

The measurement instrument was pre-tested in a pilot study that included 20 respondents. The reliability for each of the sub-dimensions was calculated using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The results ranged from 0.732 to 0.815, which were within the acceptable limits. A value above 0.8 is deemed good; a value between 0.6 and 0.8 is deemed acceptable, while a value below 0.6 is deemed unacceptable (Widd & Diggines, 2015:249). Data were analysed

using SPSS Statistics for both descriptive narration and inferential analysis.

The qualitative data were collected in the form of focus group discussions, which were recorded with an audio recorder. The purpose of the qualitative data was to gather insights that may have been missed in the quantitative data collection phase. The average duration of each focus groups was between 15 to 20 minutes. This is because children have limited attentional abilities (Issanchou, 2015:53). The moderator' guide with the focus group questions was comprised of 18 questions. The questions in the interview guide were framed to elicit responses from the tweens concerning their perceptions of (1) cool/uncool among their peers, (2) the biggest influences on their consumer behaviour (3) brand differences by race, gender and class (4) influence of celebrities on consumption behaviour and (5) the relationships that tweens have with brands. These discussions were later transcribed and Nvivo 12 Pro software was used in the coding and analysis of the data

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Sample Profile

TABLE 1
PEARSON CHI-SQUARE TESTS

Questions	Age	Grade	Gender	Race	Class
"I prefer to wear the same brand of clothes as my friends."	-	-	-	-	0.030
"What my friends think about my clothes is important."	-	0.027	0.024	-	-
I buy the same type of sneakers/takkies as my classmates	-	-	-	-	0.019
I buy the same types of sneakers/takkies as people of my race	-	-	0.035	0.05	-
The type of clothes you wear show whether your family is rich or poor	-	0.033	-	-	-
Some brands make you look cooler than others	0.044	-	-	-	-
You can tell the kind of friends a person has by the kind of clothes they wear	-	-	-	0.001	-
I feel pressure from my friends to buy certain products	-	-	-	0.002	-
I enjoy the attention I get from my friends for having cool things	0.001	0.001	-	-	-
Do you ask for something that you see on tv?	0.048	-	-	-	-
Do you ask for things that you see on the internet	-	0.021	-	-	-
"Do you think it's important to own expensive clothes?"	-	0.035	0.002	-	-
"Does having a lot of money make you happy?"	-	-	0.005	-	-
"Do you feel unhappy if you don't get the things you really want to have?"	-	-	0.014	-	-
"Do you think other children like you more if you have many expensive things?"	-	-	0.011	-	-

The first demographic variable to be analysed was age. Age was a significant variable in this investigation because the study intended to focus on the tween cohort, not just children in general. The highest number of respondents (26%) came from both the 10 and 11-year-old age groups while the least (8%) was the 14-year-old group. 17% of the tweens were aged 12 while 23% were aged 13. The mean (M=2.602) indicated that the average age for the respondents was 12, which is acceptable for a study on the tween cohort. Grade was also used as a criterion to select age-appropriate respondents, with participants ranging from grades 4 to 8. The mean (M=2.98) and the mode (m=3) suggested that that the average grade was grade 6. A strong correlation between age and grade (p=0.000, r=0.839) indicated that by and large, children of the same age were primarily in the same grade; therefore, the use of the grade variable was appropriate.

Table 1 indicates the results of the Pearson Chi-Square Test for Significance. The results reveal a p-value of less than 0.05 for 7 of the 15 questions on the age or grade variable. This means that these demographic factors played a significant role in the manner that the tweens answered those specific questions. For instance, for the question "I enjoy the attention I get from my friends for having cool things" both age and grade played a significant role in the way the question was answered, with the younger tweens from the lowest grades most likely to answer in the affirmative than older tweens. This set of results, therefore, indicates that age played a role in the manner that the tweens responded to some of the questions.

On the gender demographic, the results revealed that at 64%, females far outnumbered the males (36%) and represented almost two-thirds of the sample. According to the most recent publication of statistics of learner enrolment in South African schools, there are gender disparities in favour of females for public and private schools combined in Gauteng (DoE, 2018:8). Gender was included as a demographic variable in the present study because gender differences in consumption are important in the study of consumer culture (Joy & Li, 2012:152). The Pearson Chi-Square Test for Significance in table 1 indicated that gender played a significant role in the manner that the tweens answered some of the questions, particularly with regards to the questions on materialism. For instance, the question "do you think it's important to own expensive clothes?" revealed a p-value of 0.002, meaning that gender played a significant role in the way the tweens responded to this question. The results revealed that boys were more likely to respond in the affirmative to this question. In a question regarding what is considered cool amongst boys and girls, brands were mentioned 135 times for boys and 82 times for girls while clothing was mentioned 118 times for girls and 53 times for boys. When mentioning what cool boys wear, both genders were more likely to mention a brand, e.g. Nike while for girls, both genders were more likely to mention an item of clothing, e.g. bum shorts and crop tops. These results suggest that there is more brand consciousness among boys than girls.

The 3rd demographic variable considered was race. Racial differences in consumption patterns have always been an important variable in the study of consumer culture (Charles et al. 2009:428). South Africa is characterised by differential access to resources on the basis of race hence this variable is essential in any study. The results indicated that a large majority of the respondents (72%) were Black. This was followed by 12% White, 10% Coloured and 6% Indian. The number of respondents from highest to lowest are consistent with the racial make-up of the South African population. According to the 2011 census, black people make up the majority of South African people at 79.2% followed by white (8.9%), coloured (8%) then Indian (2.5%). The researcher does not discount the fact that the racial make-up of the target population was likely influenced by the fact that the schools which consented to participate in the study were predominantly black.

To determine if the tweens perceived racial differences in consumer behaviour, they were first presented with the question "different races wear different clothes". An overwhelming majority of the respondents (87%) responded in the affirmative. When asked which racial group affords more expensive clothes, 57% of the tweens chose 'white'. To understand perceive differences of race in apparel consumption, the tweens were presented with 4 different sneaker brands and were asked to match the brand with the race that they believed is more likely to wear it. The results revealed that for all of the racial groups, there was one brand which was the most selected. This was particularly true for black (All-Star) and white (sketchers). While it was clear which brand the Black (78%) and White (67%) races wear, there were more similarities for Coloured (44%) and Indian (44%) people. This could be because the children perceive Indians and Coloureds to have similar tastes in clothes.

The last demographic considered was socioeconomic class. According to the Bureau of Market Research (BMR), there are 5 socioeconomic classes in South Africa. Upper middle class and emerging middle had the highest percentage at 23%. These were followed by lower middle class at 20% with lower emerging middle and second-lowest class both having 17%. This variable was included because when studying matters related to sociology and culture, one cannot neglect the relevance of socioeconomic background on issues of consumption. The Pearson Chi-Square test revealed that there were some differences in responses based on socioeconomic class on some of the questions. For instance, the question "I prefer to wear the same brand as my friends" revealed a p-value of 0.030, indicating that there were significant differences in the manner that children of different socioeconomic classes responded to this question.

During the focus group discussions, when asked if there were differences between the rich and the poor in terms of the brands purchased, 61 (95%) of the respondents responded in the affirmative while only 3 said no. The discussions further revealed that the tweens perceived differences in brand consumption between people from the township and people from the suburbs. Some of the tweens believed that people from the township like to show off their brands because "in the township, they like to show off because they want to show people that even if they live in the location but (sic) they are rich". In a study on the impact of the socioeconomic environment in consumption patterns in children, Page & Ridgeway (2001:34) found that a child's environment influences their consumer behaviour and that neighbourhood of origin played a role in the responses given by the study participants.

Factor Analysis for consumption symbolism and materialism

To determine whether the data on consumption symbolism was applicable for factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), Bartlett's test of Sphericity and the total variance explained measures were considered. The results revealed that the KMO indicated a value of 0.739, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p<0.000$) and the total variance explained was 57.46%, suggesting that factor analysis was appropriate. On the material culture items, the KMO indicated a value of 0.783, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p<0.000$) and the total variance explained was 69.36%. Only those factors with an Eigenvalue of more than 1 were included.

On the consumption symbolism items, the first factor (Image) indicated the highest percentage of variance, accounting for 12.942 of the variance after rotation. It also yielded an initial eigenvalue of 1.941 after rotation. This factor describes how brands can influence the perception of others about you and how tweens sometimes want things just to fit in with others. The second factor (Social Image) had the highest number of correlated variables, whose factor loadings represented 12.753% of the variance. The rotated eigenvalue for this factor was 1.913. This factor

TABLE 2
EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

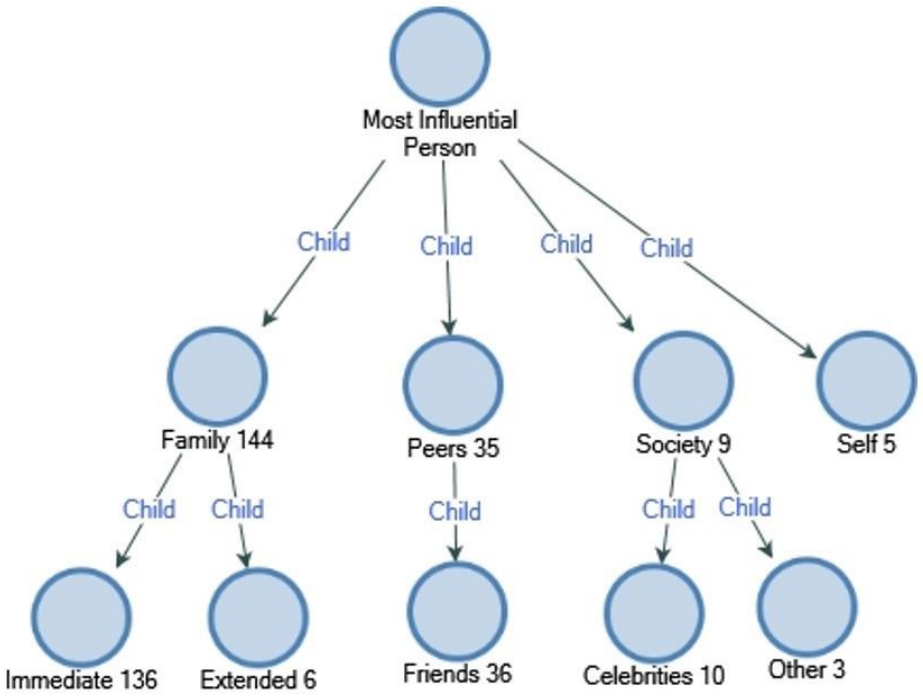
	Descriptive Measures		Factor Loadings
	Mean (M)	Std Deviation	Item Loading
CONSUMPTION SYMBOLISM			
Image			
Some brands make you look cooler than others	3.05	.967	0.681
Some brands make you more popular than others	2.82	1.122	0.780
Sometimes you want something just because your friend has it	2.76	1.016	0.578
Social Image			
My clothes show people whether I am cool or not	2.89	1.060	0.656
The type of clothes you wear show whether your family is rich or poor	2.54	1.210	0.733
I prefer to wear the same brand of clothes as my friends	2.51	1.049	0.591
Affiliation			
What my friends think about my clothes is important	2.21	1.112	0.487
My friends help me choose which clothes to buy	2.65	.964	0.370
I buy the same type of sneakers/takkies as my classmates	2.90	1.016	0.688
I buy the same types of sneakers/takkies as people of my race	2.04	1.038	0.674
Identity			
I show people who I am by the kind of clothes I wear	2.33	1.132	0.729
People like to show who they are by the kind of clothes they wear	3.34	.829	0.769
Perception			
I have called someone not cool because of the clothes they wore	1.65	.964	0.515
You can tell the friends a person has by the kind of clothes they wear	3.32	1.012	0.721
What my parents think about my clothes is important	3.37	.917	0.515
MATERIAL CULTURE			
Materialism			
Do think it's important to own expensive things?	2.03	1.092	0.874
Do you think it's important to own expensive clothes?	2.27	1.15	0.867
Do you think it's important to own expensive brands?	2.31	1.076	0.868
Happiness			
Do you think it's really true that money can buy happiness?	2.13	1.191	0.774
Do you believe that people are much happier if they can buy a lot of things?	2.72	1.146	0.773
My friends like me because I have cool clothes.	2.00	1.107	0.511
Envy			
I want to have things that other kids have.	2.15	.987	0.859
I often compare my clothes/things with those of my friends.	2.28	1.104	0.806

describes the way that brands are used to communicate something about someone's status and image. The third factor (Social Affiliation) accounted for 11.989% of the variance. The rotated eigenvalue for this factor was 1.798. This factor describes the influence of reference groups on the types of apparel that the tweens purchase. The fourth factor (Identity) The fourth factor accounted for 10.932% of the variance with the eigenvalue of 1.640 after rotation. This factor describes how clothes and by extension brands, are used to show others who one is and also how others can tell who you are from the clothes that you wear. The fifth factor (Perception) accounted for 8.852% of the variance and had an eigenvalue of 1.328 after rotation. While the previous factor looked at how tweens use their clothes to express something about themselves, this factor looked at the perceptions of tweens on how others use brands to express something about themselves.

On the materialism items, the first factor (Materialism) indicated the highest percentage of variance, accounting for 40.258% of the variance. The eigenvalue was 3.221. This factor describes the importance that the tweens place on the possession of material things. The second factor (Envy) accounted for 16.491% of the total variance, with an eigenvalue of 1.565 after rotation. This factor describes the desire to own the same possessions that other children own and how children can compare their possessions with those of other children. The last factor (Happiness) accounted for 12.614 % of the variance with an eigenvalue of 1.562 after rotation. This factor tested the extent to which the tweens believe that material wealth can lead to happiness.

An open-ended question was presented to the tweens to determine who the most influential person in their consumer behaviour is. Figure 2 below indicates the most frequently mentioned influences. The word "child" in the model below does not constitute any significant information in the data but is an NVivo generated label for sources of data flow. The parent node is the main container of information for topics or themes on a particular question. Coding references are aggregated from the child nodes. Opening the parent node reveals the information directly coded to it and the information coded at the first-level child nodes. Mother was the most mentioned response with 98 (49%), which represents almost half the respondents. The second most mentioned was friends, with 36 (18%) of the tweens stating that their friends have the most influence on the things they buy. Father (13), parents (10), celebrities (10) sister (8) and brothers (6) were the other influencers mentioned by more than 5 respondents. The rest of the other influencers including extended family members like aunt, uncle and cousin; specific celebrities like Chris Brown, Justin Bieber and Nadia Nakai and other influences such as the internet, strangers and God.

FIGURE 2
MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSON



For the quantitative items not included in the factor analysis, most of which included open-ended, dichotomous scale and matching questions as well as the qualitative responses from the focus group interviews, the table below presents a summary of all the influences identified. The qualitative data coded in Nvivo and the quantitative data from SPSS was triangulated and the themes in the table below were identified. The items included questions related to the concepts of cool vs uncool, race, society and media usage.

TABLE 3
SUMMARY OF INFLUENCE FACTORS AT EACH LEVEL

Individual	Microsystem	Mesosystem	Exosystem	Macrosystem
Age	What family thinks	Relationships with	Extended family	Societal attitudes towards
Gender	What friends think	neighbours	Family friends	material possessions
Race	Peer relations	Neighbourhood	Relationships between	Cultural values and beliefs
Access to and use of media	Family structure	religious values	parents and community	Racial attitudes on
platforms	Socioeconomic status	Neighbourhood	Relationships between	materialism
Values and beliefs	Family attitudes on material	socioeconomic conditions	parents and teachers	Technology
Consumer behaviour	wealth	Neighbourhood brand	Mass media	Global brand advertising and
Brand preferences	Family lifestyle Teachers	behaviours	Celebrities	marketing
Perceptions of cool vs uncool	Classmate relations	Neighbourhood material		Country socioeconomic
	School location	values		conditions
	School type	Neighbourhood perceptions		
	Socioeconomic status of	of cool vs uncool		
	school			
	Prevailing attitudes on			
	material wealth			
	Brand related behaviours			
	Perceptions of cool vs uncool			

DISCUSSION

From the empirical study, it was determined that children's consumption choices are affected at all levels of influence. The results revealed that at the individual level, age, race, gender and socioeconomic status were all influential. With regards to age, the results indicated that the older the child, the more likely he or she will desire branded apparel. On the gender demographic, the results revealed that boys are more brand conscious and materialistic than girls. Other researchers have found gender differences in the consumption and perceptions of brands with the nature of brands being seen as deeply gendered. (Chan, 2003; Goldberg et al., 2003; Nain et al. 2008; Handa and Khare, 2013). Racial differences in consumption were evident as 87% of the tweens indicated racial differences in consumer behaviour and when asked, allocated brand preferences on the basis of race. On psychographic and behaviouristic terms, the study revealed that media usage patterns, personal values and beliefs, consumer behaviour brand preferences and personal perceptions of what is cool or not were the most influential.

The next level of influence assessed was the microsystem (intrapersonal level). The study discovered that socialisation agents at this level were the most influential when it comes to tween's consumer behaviour. The results indicated that families and peers were the most influential, with the opinion of immediate family members being most valued. Mother was found to be the most influential figure across all ages. Socialisation theories state that in early childhood, parents are the principal socialisation agents for children (Lawlor & Prothero, 2011; De Witt, 2016). This is because, at this stage, there are more contacts with family members than any other people, and these contacts are closer, warmer and more emotional (De Witt, 2016:32). The socioeconomic status, lifestyle and attitudes towards materialism in the family were factors that were also found to be influential. While peers were the 2nd most cited influencers, when the influence of parents vs peers was compared, 83% of the children said that the opinion of their parents matters while only 39% said the opinion of their friends matters. Classmates, teachers and school

environment were found to play a role in tweens brand preferences. Prevailing attitudes towards brands and the desire to portray a certain image at school were found to be motivators for brand preferences.

In the mesosystem, the neighbourhood in which the tweens resides was found to play the most significant role in their attitudes and behaviours towards brands. Relationships with neighbours, religious values, socioeconomic conditions, brand-related behaviours, material values, and perceptions of cool vs uncool in the neighbourhood influenced tweens brand preferences. For instance, the focus group discussions revealed that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are most likely to engage in conspicuous consumption. Some of the tweens believed that people from the "township like to show off their brands because they want to show people that even if they live in the location but (sic) they are rich". These results were consistent with Piacentini and Mailer (2004:260) who also found that children from lower economic backgrounds use brands to demonstrate their 'economic competence' and to demonstrate that they are not poor. In addition, they found that children from poor schools were more brand name obsessed while children from private schools expressed distaste for heavily branded clothes.

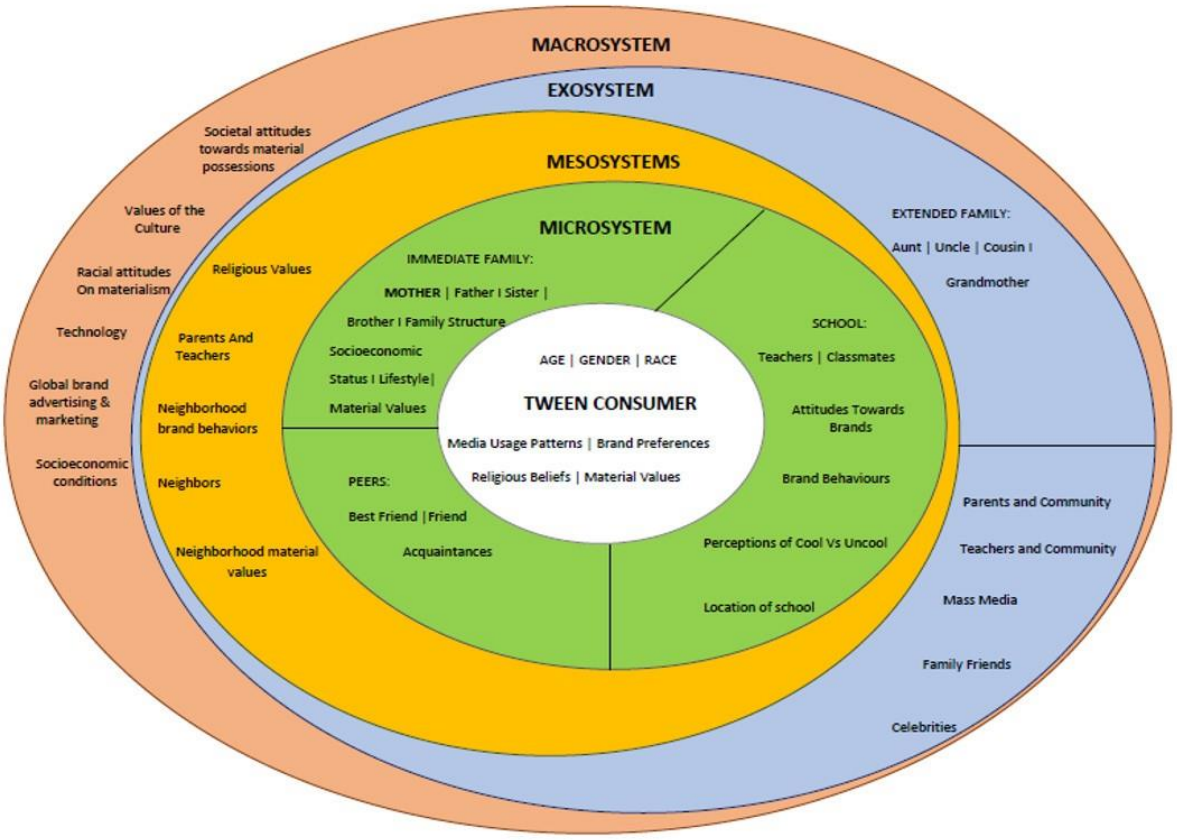
At the fourth level, which is the exosystem, the results revealed that extended family, family friends, relationships between parents and community, relationships between parents and teachers, the mass media and celebrities were the most influential. Of these, the mass media and celebrities were found to play a significant role in the style and apparel choices of the tweens. The findings revealed that 89% of the participants said that celebrities have an influence on their style. In this category, the pattern that emerged was that American celebrities were the most frequently mentioned. Celebrities "represent an idealisation of the life that most people imagine that they would love to live" (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:321). Goldberg et al. (2003:284) found that tweens are more likely to purchase something once they see someone famous speaking about it on television. Children are therefore heavily exposed to commercials and advertisements which often generate an unreasonable urge to consume (Lenka & Vandana, 2015:870). Closely related to celebrities was the influence of the mass media. Traditional media tools were found to be the most influential, with 68% of the respondents stating that they asked for things that they see on television. With regards to new media tools such as the internet and social media, less than half the respondents stated that they used them to as sources of information for brand-related decisions. These results are contrary to studies that have been carried out in the west that show that the media consumption of tweens is highly mobile (Lehman, 2018; Friedman, 2019; Jones & Glynn, 2019).

In the macrosystem, the factors that were found to likely be influential were societal attitudes towards material possessions, cultural values and beliefs, racial attitudes on materialism, technology, global brand advertising and marketing and the socioeconomic conditions of the country. With regards to materialistic values, when asked if they believed that money buys happiness or if they believed that people with more money are happier, only 39% of the tweens responded in the affirmative. However, other responses concerning brand consumption and material values revealed that they held materialistic values. This indicates that materialism is something that tweens understand is shunned in society, even though they may privately hold materialistic values. With regards to race, the tweens indicated that there were significant differences in consumer behaviour based on race, with black people being cited as being the most brand conscious. Access to and availability (or lack thereof) of technology seemed to influence consumer behaviour. Given that a significant number of the tweens stated that they do not have access to social media, it can be suggested that they do not have access to it as they do not have the technology. Based on the results and discussion above, the study proposes the socioecological model depicted in Figure 3.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends the socioecological model depicted above as a tool practitioners can use to identify the different factors which influence South African tweens consumption of apparel and clothing brands. At the centre of the model is the tween consumer where individual characteristics like race, age and gender, as well as mental and behavioural characteristics or processes that influence consumption of clothing brands and apparel. These

FIGURE 3
A SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL MODEL FOR TWEENS' CONSUMPTION OF APPAREL



behavioural patterns include media usage patterns, brand preferences, religious values and values on materialism. The results of the study indicated that the nature of brand relationships is deeply gendered. Boys reported more brand conscious attitudes, while girls revealed that the aesthetic created by specific clothing is what matters. Apparel marketing communications targeted at boys must focus on highlighting the brand itself while communications targeted at girls must highlight the visual appeal that the apparel will provide.

In the microsystem, which is the intrapersonal level, the findings indicated that immediate family members, particularly mothers are the most influential followed by peers, teachers and classmates. The results indicated that while the interactions within diverse socialisation spheres may be complex and varied, mothers are still the primary socialisation agents for South African tweens. The results showed that they are the most frequently consulted for purchase decisions; they primarily make purchases on behalf of the tweens and are trusted by tweens the most when it comes to style choices. Given that the literature survey revealed that marketing to children is still a contentious issue with marketing theorists and marketing practitioners, marketing communications on brands targeted at tweens can rather be directed at mothers.

In the mesosystem, the factors identified as being relevant were religious values, the interaction between parents and teachers, attitudes and behaviours concerning brands in the neighbourhood and materialistic values in the neighbourhood. The exosystem revealed two major subsystems, the role of extended family members and wider community factors. Wider community factors included the role of the mass media, family friends and celebrities. The role of the mass media and celebrities were the most prevalent here with children stating that they have asked for brands and other possessions that they see on TV and on the internet. The findings reveal that much of the brand interactions the surveyed tweens have come from television. Marketers seeking to capture this target audience should use television as the primary tool for communicating their brand messages to tweens. In the macrosystem, the factors identified as influencing the tweens' brand behaviours included societal attitudes towards material

possessions, values of the culture, racial attitudes on brands and material values, technology, global brand marketing and advertising and the socioeconomic conditions of society. This study argues that the insight of marketers into this segment can be enhanced if marketers can recognise tweens as social actors in their own right within consumer culture while considering the social and cultural contexts in which tweens engage with brands and consumer goods.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study support the arguments put forth by Martens et al. (2004) and Nain et al. (2008) that to understand children's relationships with brands, scholars and researchers must advance from developmental approaches and adopt approaches which conceive children as autonomous beings. The study revealed that there are multiple levels of influence that affect tween consumption of branded apparel. From the results of the empirical investigation and the literature survey, this study proposes a socio-ecological model for tweens' consumption of apparel brands. It is a socio-ecological model because it takes into account the various elements of the environment with which the tween interacts in his or her development as a consumer. The results of this study, therefore, provide useful information to marketers on how to best communicate with tween consumers.

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Perceptions of service quality dimensions and patronage of street food vendors in South African townships

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ABSTRACT

Street food vendors are common in South Africa's townships and are typically patronised by individuals in lower-income brackets. The extent to which service quality considerations play a role in the patronage of such informal, survivalist food businesses remains largely unexplored as service quality studies tend to focus more on well-established businesses. In response to this shortcoming, this empirical study investigates whether customers' perceptions of service quality – based on the dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy – are related to repeat patronage of street food vendors. The researchers assumed a positivist philosophical disposition and relied on data collected from a purposive sample of patrons to investigate the possible existence of relationships between service quality dimensions and repeat patronage. Results revealed favourable perception scores for tangibles, assurance and reliability but not for responsiveness and empathy. The service quality perceptions of first-time customers were also shown to be statistically different from those of repeat patrons. Interestingly, while findings point to the existence of statistically significant relationships between service quality dimensions and repeat patronage, the weak and moderate strengths of the identified relationships highlight that patronage considerations for the studied population possibly lie outside the five dimensions of service quality.

Keywords: customer perceptions; street vending; food; service quality; patronage; townships

INTRODUCTION

Rising demand for food in the population has led to an increase in food service outlets which in turn, has heightened the level of competition in the industry. According to Nwokah & Adiele (2018:1), this increasing demand for food is because of changes in consumption patterns, composition of households, income levels and time-pressures that are evident in modern society. While there are studies conducted on service quality, the area of customers' service quality perceptions and repeat patronage of informal street food vendors in South African townships remains largely unexplored. This is partly because studies on street food vending, according to Stutter (2017:2), have focused primarily on issues of health, hygiene and safety related to the foods being sold.

As a type of business, street vending involves, among others, the sale of food and the provision of hairdressing services or even car repairs that take place on pavements, kiosks, busy public areas, bus stations and open spaces in towns and cities (Mukhola, 2015:309). In essence, street vending entails the offering of products/services to the public using temporary, static or mobile stalls. Street food comprises ready-to-eat meals and beverages usually sold

in streets and other similar places (Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2009). Over time, street food vending has been recognised as a fast-growing area of business and is becoming a worldwide phenomenon, because street food is an important source of daily meals for many people living in urban areas (Rheinlander, 2006:6) – particularly for low-income earners. This may be the case within South African townships where a significant portion of the resident population falls below subsistence levels and remains impoverished (World Bank, 2014). According to Thulo (2015), this is because, in South Africa, approximately 60% of unemployed people reside in the townships and informal settlements.

Townships in South Africa, according to Cant (2017), are typically underdeveloped urban residential areas which were earmarked for Indians, Coloureds and Africans, owing to the racial segregation policy of the government during the apartheid era. Bvuma & Marnewick (2020) assert that the apartheid government prohibited black people from owning businesses and threatened them with prosecution for engaging in business activities. While the apartheid-era laws no longer exist in the post-1994 democratic South Africa, Marnewick (2014) argues that townships still bear incontrovertible evidence of past abandonment as they lack infrastructure and resources that are required to support businesses and decent living in general. It is against this background that Cant & Rabie (2018) declare that many challenges confront small businesses in South Africa's townships – to which even the government is privy.

Nonetheless, Brown & Rammidi (2014:79) opine that small businesses in the informal sector contribute substantially to economic growth in developing countries. In essence, since township-based businesses, like those owned by street food vendors, are typically informal in nature, their value to the South African economy cannot be disregarded. In spite of this, research specifically focused on the township small-business context, in South Africa, is generally lacking (Bvuma & Marnewick, 2020). Cognisant of the importance of street food vending, and the paucity of research on service quality concerning such businesses in developing countries, this empirical study is driven by the intention to enrich extant literature in this regard, especially from a South African context. In doing so, the study concurrently seeks to highlight some practical lessons for street food vendors and other stakeholders in the industry. Consequently, the objectives of the study are to:

- ascertain customers' perceptions of the performance of street food vendors as it pertains to service quality dimensions;
- determine if statistical differences exist in the perceptions of the service quality dimensions between repeat patrons and first-time customers of street food vendors; and
- establish if there are any relationships between customers' perceptions of service quality dimensions and repeat patronage of street food vendors in South African townships.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Street food vending

Besides servicing the need for food, street food vendors play an important role in showcasing local culture and traditions through various types of cuisines often sold on the street from non-permanent structures (Choi, Lee & Ok, 2013:223). In South Africa, a common street food sold by vendors is the Sowetan kota, which is a quarter-loaf of white bread often stuffed with a mix of processed meat and fried potato chips (Steyn, Labadarios & Nel, 2011:6). Generally, street food vendors fall within the category of survivalist businesses, described by Bvuma & Marnewick (2020) as businesses that exist primarily as a means of subsistence for their owners and dependants. Street food vendors mostly operate from non-permanent stalls, typically without superfluities, that barely meet the functional requirements of their businesses. This notwithstanding, street food vending businesses have become popular among customers, largely because of their lower prices relative to formal fast-food outlets, and this has made them an attractive option mostly for people in lower-income groups (Steyn et al., 2011:1).

Service quality and repeat patronage

Service quality is an abstract and contextual concept (Izogo, 2017:22; Zietsman Mostert & Svensson, 2019:3) that is worthy of attention in an increasingly competitive business environment. Eresia-Eke, Stephanou & Swanepoel (2018:1) aver that in a contemporary business environment, the consistent delivery of good quality service could be what distinguishes a struggling business from a thriving one. In consonance with this opinion, Hossain, Hossain & Chowdhury (2018:148) maintain that service quality is, undoubtedly, a critical element of success for any business.

According to Tegambwage (2017:76), service quality is essentially based on a comparison of the customers' expectation (before using the service) and their experience (after using the service). Therefore, service quality pivots around efforts to meet the expectations of customers (Van Truong, Pham & Vo, 2016:122). These positions clearly signal that service quality is a concept determined on the basis of customer perceptions, which businesses can ill-afford to take for granted. The need for businesses to pay ample attention to service quality is emphasised as the rendering of high-quality service catalyses business success because, across diverse industries, service quality contributes to customer satisfaction (Teeroovengadum, 2020). In support of this stance, Izogo & Ogba (2015:254) argue that service quality substantially contributes to customer loyalty, while Santhi & Ganesh (2015:243) assert that in the services sector, service quality can engender business profitability. These opinions imply that favourable customer perceptions of a food vendor's service quality, relative to those of competitors, would engender improved business performance.

Among street food vendors, improved business performance, in terms of sales revenue, may be attributed to repeat patronage, which is evidenced by repurchases made by customers. Research shows that for restaurants, service quality is an essential factor in customers' repeat patronage intentions (Kim, Ng & Kim, 2009:11). The more favourably customers rate the service quality offering of a business, the higher their patronage intentions of that particular business are likely to become (Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal & Voss, 2002:135). Understanding patronage intentions enables businesses to serve customers better (Pan & Zinkhan, 2006:229); therefore, this may prove critical for street food vendors. This is to be expected, as customers that are satisfied with the service-quality of a business would repeatedly make use of the service (Teeroovengadum, 2020). For the measurement of service quality, the current study adopts the Parasuraman, Zeithami & Berry (1988) SERVQUAL model, which comprises five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Instructively, each of these dimensions can be quantified by measuring customers' perceptions of the performance levels of the service attributes relevant to each dimension (Hansen, 2014:119).

Tangibles, as a service quality dimension, refer to the physical evidence of a service, such as the facilities, equipment and the employees that render the service (Baloglu, Busser, Kincaid & Mao, 2010:210; Saliba & Zoran, 2018:163). Customers generally pay attention to tangibles when evaluating the service quality of a business (Esmaeilpour, Mohamadi & Rajabi, 2016; Priporas, Stylos & Vedanthachari, 2017; Wang & Nicolau, 2017; Ju, Back, Choi & Lee, 2019). However, a contrary opinion is peddled by Gagic, Tesanovic & Jovicic (2013:172) who insist that tangibles do not play a significant role in influencing the service quality perceptions of customers. According to Malhotra, Ulgado, Agarwal, Shainesh & Wu (2005:266), in developing countries, unlike in developed countries, customers tend to be satisfied with just the acceptable performance of the core service since they utilise highly functional criteria for making choices; they are, therefore, usually not interested in extended features or benefits. This observation is debatable as the decision to patronise a store, with regard to tangibles, is likely to be determined by the degree of sensitivity of the customer to physical stimuli. This position is supported by Dabestani, Shahi, Saljoughian & Shirouyehzad (2016:172) who assert that in the hotel industry, for instance, tangibles are critical to the creation of positive perceptions of service quality and the courting of patronage. Mindful of the discordance in opinions, this study elects to hypothesise that with respect to street food vendors in South African townships:

H1: A significant relationship exists between customer perceptions of the service quality dimension of tangibles and repeat patronage

Reliability, as a service quality dimension, refers to the capacity to consistently perform the required service accurately and dependably (Kwok, Jusoh & Khalifah, 2016a). This implies that the dimension of reliability is concerned with a service provider's ability to deliver or perform the promised service consistently and accurately (Fida, Ahmed, Al-Balushi & Singh, 2020). According to Yousapronpaiboon (2014:1093), reliability is about businesses providing services as promised. This is likely to elicit customer satisfaction rather than complaints. In many cases, reliability has proven to be a critical service dimension because whenever the main service is not delivered as expected, customers switch to another service provider (Mmutle & Shonhe, 2017:6). In agreement with this, the study of Du Plooy, Van Zyl & De Jager (2012), which was conducted on the informal grocery retail sector in South Africa, revealed that reliability

was an important factor for customers' purchase decisions. Encouraged by this position, the study hypothesises that in the context of street food vendors in South African townships:

H2: A significant relationship exists between customer perceptions of the service quality dimension of reliability and repeat patronage

Yarimoglu (2014:83) suggests that responsiveness, as a service quality dimension, is concerned with the readiness or willingness to be of assistance to customers while rendering the service. This could be of critical importance among street food vendors, especially as competitors offering similar products are located close by, which could make switching to a different vendor, quite easy. Alhkami & Alarussi (2016:119) assert that the responsiveness dimension of service quality is important because customers often feel more valued if they sense that the business takes their expectations seriously and adequately responds to their needs. To further this argument, Wu, Huang & Chou (2014:175) posit that responsiveness is indeed the most critical service quality dimension considered by patrons of people-based businesses (as opposed to machine-based or automated businesses). These arguments encourage the projection that in street food vending businesses, favourable perceptions of responsiveness by customers may coincide with repeat patronage of a specific vendor. Consequently, the study hypothesises that among street food vendors in South African townships:

H3: A significant relationship exists between customer perceptions of the service quality dimension of responsiveness and repeat patronage

Assurance, as a dimension of service quality, relates to the utilisation of knowledge/skills to create and nurture confidence in customers that the desired service would be delivered as required. In a study of Malaysian Islamic banks, Kashif, Wan Shukran, Rehman & Sarifuddin (2015) found that assurance has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. Granted that this is the case, it would be tenable to expect that satisfied customers would embody a higher propensity to remain with the bank, and this amounts to repeat patronage. Moghavvemi, Lee & Lee (2018) found that bank customers in Malaysia – in an online banking context – considered assurance as the most important service quality dimension that contributes to customer satisfaction. To the contrary, Tucci & Talaga's (2000) study of customers' perceptions of service quality in restaurants found that assurance does not play a significant role in the customer satisfaction equation, as customers do not perceive the knowledge (or lack thereof) of a service provider as a critical factor for determining service quality.

The arguments related to assurance as a service quality dimension, reveal a lack of consensus in opinions and findings in extant literature. To some extent, the existence of these different opinions indicates that perceptions of service quality dimensions differ across contexts (Teeroovengadum, 2020). The implication of this is that previous findings – generated from studies in different contexts – may not provide a premise to make accurate inferences about the perceptions of assurance (as a service quality dimension) among customers of street food vendors in South African townships. Nonetheless, persuaded by the argument of Fida et al. (2020) that satisfactory business performance along the dimension of assurance will lessen anxieties among customers about the service being provided, the study projects that favourable perceptions of assurance may encourage repeat purchases from particular street food vendors in South African townships. Therefore, this study, while acknowledging the lack of consensus in the extant literature, opts to hypothesise that for street food vendors operating in South African townships:

H4: A significant relationship exists between customer perceptions of the service quality dimension of assurance and repeat patronage

Empathy refers to the care and personal attention given to customers in the course of rendering the service. According to Nell & Cant (2014), empathy relates to the attention and care that the business accords its customers so that their needs are met. In order for street food vendors to do this, they would have to understand the customer. While it would seem important to understand all aspects of the customer's life, in developing countries it is more important for

businesses to understand how the customer uses and benefits from a service (Malhotra et al., 2005:262). The study of Lee, Kim, Ko & Sagas (2011) on high-profile golf club businesses found that empathy scored the highest relative to other service quality dimensions and is, therefore, an important antecedent of customer satisfaction. Similarly, Bougoure & Neu (2010) found in their study of Malaysian fast-food restaurants that failure to provide empathetic services to consumers led to customer dissatisfaction.

In another study conducted by Kwok et al. (2016b), empathy was adjudged to be critical to customers' perceived quality of service. Against this background, it is plausible that in cases where customers feel that they have not received desired individualised attention, stemming from a business' low empathetic disposition, it could result in a dissatisfied customer and, ultimately, the possible loss of patronage. Conversely, if the customers feel that they have received desired individualised attention from a street food vendor in a South African township, it is likely to result in repeat patronage. Based on this view, it is hypothesised that in the context of street food vendors in South African townships:

H5: A significant relationship exists between the service quality dimension of empathy and repeat patronage

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This empirical quantitative study was conducted from the philosophical standpoint of positivism. The target population for this study consists of individuals who purchased food from street food vendors in the South African townships of Mamelodi, Palm Springs and Thaba Nchu. As the study focuses on the perceptions of service quality linked to street food vendors in townships, the units of observation were the individual customers.

The study employs a non-probability, purposive sampling method since there was no accurate or suitable sampling frame available from which to draw a probability sample. Without a sampling frame, it cannot be guaranteed that every member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the study (Quinlan, Babin, Carr, Griffin & Zikmund, 2015:180), and this would make random sampling problematic. An effort, however, was made to ensure that the study sample is demographically diverse and reflects the composition of the target population.

Data for the study was collected by intercepting the customers of street food vendors after they had purchased their desired meals. Though over 300 individuals were physically approached to participate in the study, not all of them accepted the request. This was for various reasons including lack of interest and time constraints. Nonetheless, the study realised 200 completed questionnaires. The measuring instrument was predominantly based on Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) 22-item SERVQUAL scale which is used for the measurement of perceived service quality. The SERVQUAL scale comprised statements to which customers of street food vendors responded by selecting one of seven options on a 7-point Likert-style scale. Options ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The instrument also contained questions about patronage and the demographics of the respondents. With the use of the IBM SPSS Statistics 24 programme, descriptive and inferential statistical tools were subsequently employed for the purpose of data analysis.

Although the SERVQUAL instrument was previously utilised and validated in other studies (see Husin, Romle, Udin, Shahuri & Yusoff, 2016; Datta & Vardhan, 2017; Tegambwage, 2017), it was still analysed in this study to ascertain its reliability. The results are shown in Table 1.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients – for all the service quality dimensions – are above the generally recommended

TABLE 1
RESULTS OF RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Service quality dimensions	Tangibles	Reliability	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy
Number of scale items	4	5	4	4	5
Cronbach's alpha	0.829	0.848	0.742	0.748	0.837

threshold of 0.7. Item-total statistics were considered, especially Cronbach's alpha coefficients that could be realised if a specific item is deleted. It was observed that no meaningful improvement would be achieved. Moreover, since the SERVQUAL instrument was previously validated and utilised in various studies, the scales and measurement items were not altered and were considered to be reliable enough for the data that were collected through them to be analysed.

Ethical considerations

The ethical requirements for undertaking academic research were complied with. Part of this meant that each respondent was required to read and sign an informed consent form before completing the questionnaire. The form explained the purpose of the study and emphasised that participation in the study was completely voluntary and that the respondent could withdraw at any time. It also assured anonymity and confidentiality. Consequently, respondents' names and other identifying information were not required and were, therefore, not included in the data set. All results were calculated and reported at an aggregate level and not at the level of individual respondents.

Presentation of Findings

As presented in Table 2, the demographic profile of the respondent population for the study shows that it was made up of 125 males (62.5%), 72 females (36%) and 3 individuals (1.5%) who chose not to indicate their gender. Concerning the ages of respondents, four age-group categories of 18-25 years, 26-35 years, 36-45 years and over-45 years were created. Responses show that the highest number (74 or 37%) of individuals that took part in the study was in the 26-35 years' bracket. Conversely, the least represented age category was the 36-45 years bracket which had 28 respondents (14%).

Table 3 presents the values of the means and standard deviations associated with the service quality dimensions

TABLE 2:
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS (N=200)

		N	Valid Percent (%)
Gender	Male	125	62.5
	Female	72	36
	Missing	3	1.5
	Total	200	100
Age	18-25	48	24
	26-35	74	37
	36-45	28	14
	45+	47	23.5
	Missing	3	1.5
	Total	200	100

that were measured. The highest and lowest mean values, based on the 7-point Likert scale that was utilised, were associated with the dimensions of assurance (5.60) and empathy (3.09), respectively. Compared to the mid-point score of 3.5 on a 7-point scale, the mean scores obtained for the dimensions of assurance, tangibles and reliability are indicative of favourable customer perceptions. In contrast, the mean scores for the dimensions of empathy and responsiveness signal that customers have a poor perception of the performance of the street food vendors with respect to those dimensions.

TABLE 3
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS (N=200)

Constructs	Mean	Standard deviation
Tangibles	5.48	1.30
Reliability	5.40	1.30
Responsiveness	3.19	1.41
Assurance	5.60	1.15
Empathy	3.09	1.45

The study sought to determine if statistically significant differences exist between the perceptions of service quality dimensions of repeat patrons and those of first-time customers of street food vendors. Before this could be done, it was necessary to examine associated data for normality and linearity in order to determine whether to utilise a parametric or non-parametric statistical tool for the intended analysis. The study employed a Shapiro-Wilk test and a visual analysis of distributions, displayed in histograms and Q-Q probability plots, to evaluate the normality and linearity of the data distribution related to perceptions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The Shapiro-Wilk test results are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4:
RESULTS OF THE SHAPIRO WILK TEST OF NORMALITY

		Shapiro Wilk	
		Statistic	p-value
Tangibles	Repeat Patrons	.845	.000
	First-time Customers	.961	.526
Reliability	Repeat Patrons	.890	.000
	First-time Customers	.975	.833
Responsiveness	Repeat Patrons	.952	.000
	First-time Customers	.959	.494
Assurance	Repeat Patrons	.902	.000
	First-time Customers	.940	.222
Empathy	Repeat Patrons	.924	.000
	First-time Customers	.960	.513

For all the service quality dimensions, the p-value for repeat patrons is less than 0.05. This is an indication that the data linked to the repeat patrons sub-group are not normally distributed. Conversely, for all the service quality dimensions, the p-value for first-time customers is greater than 0.05, indicating that the data associated with this sub-group of respondents has a normal distribution. However, before deciding to use either the parametric independent samples t-test or its non-parametric alternative, the Mann-Whitney U test, it was imperative to examine the distributions graphically. Interestingly, a visual inspection of the normal Q-Q plots revealed the existence of acceptably linear relationships for all the service quality dimensions – for both the repeat patrons and first-time customers. In effect, the visual inspection of the data distribution showed that the assumption of linearity was not violated. Consequently, the conclusion was that the deviation from normality of the repeat patrons' sub-group was not substantial; an independent samples t-test was, therefore, utilised for further analysis of the data.

The independent samples t-test was conducted to simultaneously evaluate the second assumption of equality of variances and determine if there are statistically significant differences between the perceptions of repeat patrons and those of first-time customers, as it pertains to the five dimensions of service quality. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5
RESULTS OF THE INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	p-value	t	df[1]	p-value (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Tangibles	Equal variances assumed	.676	.412	5.844	194	.000	1.62397	.27789
	Equal variances not assumed			5.439	24.173	.000	1.62397	.29859
Reliability	Equal variances assumed	.309	.579	7.003	194	.000	1.87314	.26746
	Equal variances not assumed			6.845	24.750	.000	1.87314	.27365
Responsiveness	Equal variances assumed	.001	.972	2.440	194	.016	.78413	194
	Equal variances not assumed			2.407	24.867	.024	.78413	24.867
Assurance	Equal variances assumed	.016	.900	8.619	194	.000	1.94000	.22508
	Equal variances not assumed			8.209	24.435	.000	1.94000	.23634
Empathy	Equal variances assumed	.886	.348	3.813	194	.000	1.22324	.32078
	Equal variances not assumed			4.210	26.576	.000	1.22324	.29053

The p-values obtained with the Levene's test for equality of variances for the service quality dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy were 0.412, 0.579, 0.972, 0.900 and 0.348, respectively. Given that all these values are greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis of equal variances could not be rejected, which meant that the t-test assuming equal variances had to be interpreted. Accordingly, the p-values obtained with the t-test for Equality of Means, with equal variances assumed, are 0.000 for all the service quality dimensions, except for the dimension of responsiveness where the p-value obtained is 0.016. At a 95% confidence level, these p-values provide statistical support for the position that there are, indeed, statistically significant differences in the perceptions of repeat patrons and first-time customers as far as the dimensions of service quality are concerned.

Since the dependent variable of the study was measured on a dichotomous, ordinal scale, the study's hypotheses were tested with the use of the point-biserial correlation analysis. The aim of undertaking the point-biserial correlation analysis was to establish whether there was a statistically significant relationship between each service quality dimension (independent variables) and the study's dependent variable of repeat patronage. Table 6 shows the results obtained for each service quality dimension.

The fact that all the p-values presented in Table 6 are less than 0.05 is evidence that statistically significant relationships exist between the independent variables of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and the dependent variable of repeat patronage at a 95% confidence level. Against this background, the study

TABLE 6
RESULTS OF POINT-BISERIAL CORRELATION TESTS (N=196)

		Repeat patronage
Tangibles	Pearson Correlation	-.387**
	p-value	.000
Reliability	Pearson Correlation	-.449**
	p-value	.000
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	-.173*
	p-value	.016
Assurance	Pearson Correlation	-.526**
	p-value	.000
Empathy	Pearson Correlation	-.264**
	p-value	.000

** Correlation is significant

concludes that there is statistical support for its five hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5) that suggest the existence of significant relationships between each of the service quality dimensions and repeat patronage of street food vendors. The values of the Pearson correlation coefficients imply that inverse relationships exist between the five service quality dimensions and repeat patronage. According to Dancey & Reidy (2007), correlation coefficients in the 0.010 to 0.39, 0.40 to 0.69 and 0.70 to 0.90 ranges represent weak, moderate and strong relationships, respectively. Consequently, the results in Table 6 indicate that the relationships between repeat patronage and each of the service quality dimensions of tangibles, responsiveness and empathy (as expressed in H1, H3, and H5) are weak. Furthermore, the relationships between repeat patronage and the service quality dimensions of reliability and assurance (as expressed in H2 and H4) are moderate.

DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While the study found that all service quality dimensions are statistically related to repeat patronage, it also provided evidence that customer perceptions of the performance of street food vendors, specifically concerning the service quality dimensions of responsiveness and empathy, lag behind the other three dimensions. Nevertheless, in the spirit of continuous improvement, it is necessary for street food vendors to repeatedly examine their entire service offering to establish specific areas where improvements can be made – while being guided by the framework of the five service quality dimensions.

Firstly, regarding the dimension of tangibles, while it is understandable that street food vendors typically operate from non-permanent structures, they must ensure that their outlets are always clean and well-kept. This not only improves the aesthetic appeal of their outlets, but it also has important safety and hygiene implications. Secondly, as it pertains to the reliability dimension, street food vendors have to devise quicker ways of food preparation and service. It may be worthwhile for street food vendors to have some components of the food mixed and ready, akin to semi-finished goods in a manufacturing process. Upon receipt of a customer's order, the food can then be finalised in accordance with the customer's requirements. Thirdly, with respect to the dimension of responsiveness, street food vendors should actively source customer opinions and improvement suggestions, as these could enable the vendors to identify important areas where adjustments can easily be made to meet customers' expectations. Fourthly, for the dimension of assurance, street food vendors may need to enrol in short-apprenticeship food-vending courses and conspicuously display approvals to operate, issued by local municipalities, as these may help to build trust and confidence in customers. Lastly, regarding the empathy dimension of service quality, street food vendors may need to engage more, even if informally, with customers. Such engagements could improve their knowledge of customers, foster stronger relationships and improve their ability to provide individualised attention to patrons.

The identified weak and moderate correlations between service quality dimensions and repeat patronage are instructive. The results could mean that the overbearing consideration for study respondents, vis-à-vis their patronage of street food vendors may be linked to a kaleidoscope of other considerations not limited to quantity, convenience and cost, among others. Street food vendors typically sell quickly-prepared food to customers; this characteristic of street food vendors could mean that what drives patronage goes beyond the strict dimensions of tangibility, assurance, empathy, reliability and responsiveness, which are typically applied to more established service organisations. This is understandably so, given that street food vendors are located in the townships and their target market generally comprises low-income earners. This is the case, as South Africa is faced with high levels of poverty and unemployment (Ohonba, Ngepah & Simo-Kengne, 2019:33) and a proportion of this cohort of people reside in townships. It is therefore plausible that the individuals from the townships who participated in the current study fall within the low-income bracket or are unemployed; therefore, issues of cost, for instance, rather than quality were paramount to them.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

As with any other research endeavour, this study, along with its results, has some limitations. Since the relationships between the five service quality dimensions and repeat patronage were found to be either weak or moderate for the

respondent study population, future studies could sample other South African townships to test the veracity of these findings. Additionally, a qualitative methodological approach could be utilised for investigating the nexus between customers' perceptions of service quality dimensions and repeat patronage. The use of a non-probability sampling technique means that the results of the study cannot be generalised to a larger population. As the study focused on customers in selected South African townships, the results cannot be presumed to be true for every other location where street food vendors operate in South Africa. Future research could, therefore, be based on data obtained from randomly selected respondents. Further, the fact that repeat patronage was measured on a dichotomous, ordinal scale limited the statistical analysis options for the study's data; this can be avoided with the use of interval or ratio scales. In addition, future studies could further investigate the curious finding of an inverse relationship between service quality dimensions and repeat patronage – particularly among low-income earners – as this could validate or disprove the findings of this study.

CONCLUSION

The study was driven by the intention to realise three objectives. Firstly, the study sought to ascertain customers' perceptions of the performance of street food vendors as it pertains to service quality dimensions. Findings showed that customers had favourable perceptions of street food vendors' performance with respect to the service quality dimensions of tangibles, responsiveness and assurance, but this was not quite the case for empathy and reliability. Secondly, the study sought to determine if statistical differences exist between the perceptions of service quality dimensions of repeat patrons and those of first-time customers of street food vendors. The results of an independent samples t-test indicated that statistically significant differences exist between repeat patrons' and first-time customers' perceptions of street food vendors' performance, for the five dimensions of service quality. Finally, the third study objective was to establish if there are any relationships between customers' perceptions of service quality dimensions and repeat patronage of street food vendors in South African townships. Results of the point-biserial correlation analysis showed that all the service quality dimensions – tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy – had statistically significant relationships with repeat patronage.

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